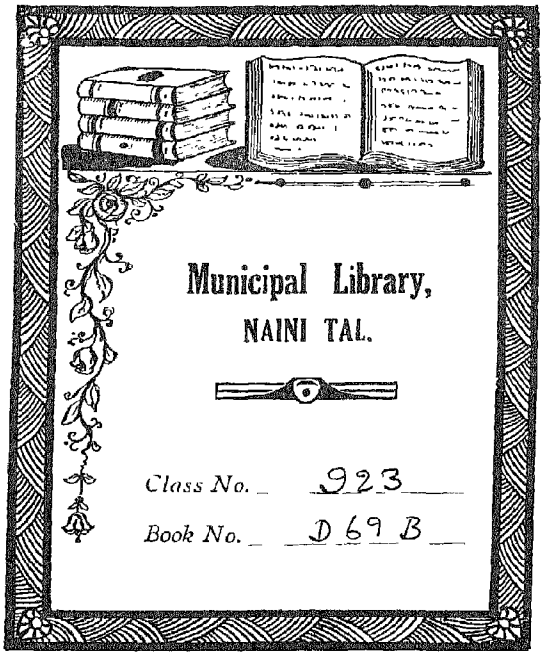
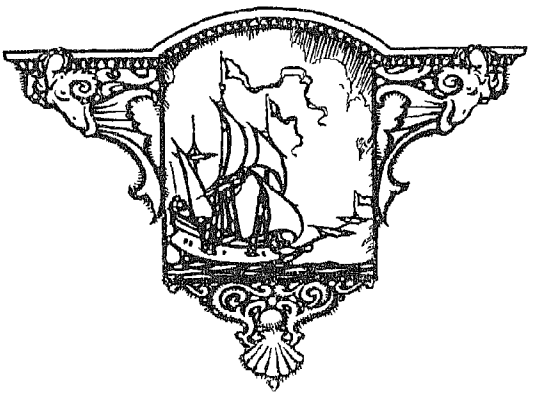

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THE GOLDEN HIND SERIES

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DRAKE

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SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

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Sir Francis Drake

By E. F. BENSON



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THIS BOOK

CONCERNING THE DAYS AND DEEDS

OF

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE, THE KING OF SAILORS

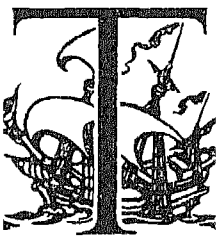
IS

BY HIS MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS PERMISSION

DEDICATED TO

GEORGE V, OUR SAILOR KING

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION



WO of the greatest gifts with which nature has endowed man are faith and curiosity—not the faith of mere credulity, nor the curiosity which expresses itself by a turn of the neck, but each in the degree which requires the highest courage, even unto death, if necessary, for its complete satisfaction. That is why the ordinary mortal, I fancy, is more fascinated by and yet less able to comprehend the mentality of the martyr or the explorer than that of other fellow human beings. When both qualities are combined in the person of one man, his feelings are likely to reach an intensity which is rare concerning folk long dead and gone. Perhaps herein lies the reason for the glamour which will always surround such names as Drake, Gilbert, Hudson, Grenville, and Scott.

It is not claimed that all the heroes of the biographies in this series were martyrs; it is admitted that none of them were saints. But all of them possessed in superlative degree that passion of curiosity, fortified by boundless courage, without which men would not set themselves moving into the unknown and dangerous places of the world. None of them was actuated primarily by greed; most of them, in fact, came from a class familiar with hereditary possessions. Few found wealth

and nearly all found death in their wanderings. And if their faith in God was not always strong, their belief in their country's great destiny was unshakable, and on her behalf they were content to die.

The first seven figures in the series have been selected from the Elizabethan era. There has been no more wonderful period in the history of the world, and no men more responsible for its greatness than these. If the character of each was far from perfect, if each in his degree possessed the vices of his age as well as those of his particular temperament, nevertheless, as a group, they invested themselves and their age with an aura of grandeur which made them unique in the annals of the sea, of exploration, and of the extension of Empire.

Each biographer has been completely free to present his subject as seemed to him best. The one endeavour has been to effect a complete and truthful, and, so far as possible, definitive picture of the man under consideration. The series makes no pretence to fresh bibliographical discoveries, although, in fact, a number will appear to the expert. It has simply been the object of each author to examine with fresh eyes all the available material, especially the documents left by the explorer concerned and his contemporaries, and from it to construct a work which shall at once be authentic and readable. If these objects be served the series will have fulfilled its aim.

For the purposes of readability certain sacrifices have been made which perhaps strict scholarship would not allow. Footnotes and extracts from contemporary sources have either been omitted or reduced to a minimum: for

these, whatever their value otherwise, hinder the reader in his progress by distracting his mind and spoiling his page. Every volume will, however, contain a working bibliography at the end, as well as an index. The illustrations, all taken from contemporary sources, will in every instance include one or more maps.

It would be too much to hope for a uniform value in these successive volumes. Several of the subjects have already had a vast amount of erudition lavished upon them, whilst others remain practically without a full-length bibliography. We can only hope that the former will be found worthy to stand beside their predecessors, while perhaps approaching more nearly to the taste of the reader of this day, and that the latter will be found to have filled adequately certain obvious gaps in the shelves of historical biography.

MILTON WALDMAN.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION		vii
CHAP.		
I	DRAKE'S BIRTH AND BOYHOOD	1
II.	DRAKE'S FIRST SIGHT OF THE INDIES	11
III.	THE SORROWFUL VOYAGE TO SAN JUAN D'ULUA	27
IV.	DRAKE'S DRUM IS HEARD ON THE SPANISH MAIN	43
V.	THE CAPTURE OF THE TREASURE TRAINS	68
VI.	THE START OF THE CIRCUMNAVIGATION	94
VII.	THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF DOUGHTY	108
VIII.	THE "GOLDEN HIND" IN THE PACIFIC	140
IX.	THE COMPLETION OF THE CIRCUMNAVIGATION	159
X.	DRAKE ON SHORE (1580-1585)	171
XI.	A VOYAGE TO THE INDIES (1585)	188
XII.	THE CADIZ EXPEDITION	204
XIII.	THE COMING OF THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA	221
XIV.	THE PASSING OF THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA	241
XV.	THE PORTUGAL EXPEDITION	265
XVI.	DRAKE'S FALL AND RECOVERY	282
XVII.	DRAKE GOES WEST	293
BIBLIOGRAPHY		306
INDEX		309

ILLUSTRATIONS

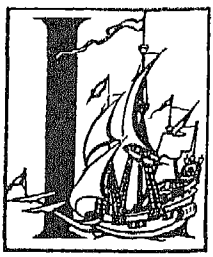
The Voyage around the World .	*Front and back endpapers*
Sir Francis Drake—the Hondius Portrait . .	*Frontispiece*
Sir Francis Drake—the Hilliard Miniature .	*Facing page* 16
Cartagena	„ „ 58
The Golden Hind	„ „ 112
Saint Iago	„ „ 146
Saint Domingo	„ „ 194
Saint Augustine	„ „ 218
The Armada off Gravelines . . .	„ „ 260

Note.—The Hilliard Miniature is reproduced by the kind permission of the Earl of Derby. The Map of the Voyage around the World forms part of a broadsheet entitled *Corte Beschrynge*, issued in Holland in 1595; it describes the circumnavigations of both Drake and Cavendish, and has a portrait of each. The four charts of the Spanish Main towns raided by Drake in 1585 are taken from the *Expeditio Francisci Draki*, Leyden, 1588. The Armada picture is contained in a German version of *Franciscus Dracus Redivivus*, entitled *Kurze Beschreibung*, Amsterdam, 1596.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

CHAPTER I

DRAKE'S BIRTH AND BOYHOOD



IT is a melancholy thing for any biographer to be obliged to confess at the outset that he has no absolutely certain announcement to make as to when his hero was born. But such is here the case: for while there is no record whatever of the day of the month or even the month itself when Francis Drake came into the world, there are, most embarrassingly, several records, none of which can be set aside without examination, which assign different dates for the year in which one of the most auspicious events in English history took place.

The first of these records is a miniature of Francis Drake by Hilliard: it was at one time at Strawberry Hill, and is now in the possession of the Earl of Derby, who has very kindly allowed me to describe and reproduce this most interesting picture. It is painted on cardboard cut out of a playing-card, and on the back of it appears the ace of hearts and the inscription, "Franciscus Drake Miles." In front round the head of the portrait is the painter's inscription, stating that it was executed in 1581, and that Drake was then forty-two years of age. According to this, therefore, he was born, if the date of the painting was previous to his birthday, in 1538, if later, in 1539. Were there no evidence to conflict with this, we should take it as being perfectly satisfactory, since the authenticity of the miniature is quite beyond

question. But there is such evidence, both direct and inferential, which makes it difficult not to suppose that Hilliard made a mistake about Drake's age.

The second of these records is a statement by the chronicler Stow, that Drake was twenty-two years old when he was in command of the "Judith" at San Juan d'Ulua.[1] This, we know, was in 1568, and therefore Drake was born in 1546. Sir Julian Corbett, in his book, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*,[2] accepts this date as the correct one, on the ground of Stow's "general accuracy." But it has escaped his notice (it escaped Stow's notice also) that this chronicler also tells us that Drake was fifty-five years old when he died. The day, month, and year of his death are known and undisputed: he died on January 28th, 1596. This is inconsistent with Stow's first statement, and, if correct, makes the year of Drake's birth 1541.

The third of these records is a portrait. Francis Drake, when fame and fortune had come to him, purchased from Sir Richard Grenville a place called Buckland Abbey, near Plymouth. While living there, this full-length portrait of him was painted, and it still hangs there. It bears the inscription *aetatis suae* 53, with the date of the year in which it was painted, 1594. According to the portrait, therefore, Drake was born in 1541.

Now this date is at variance with that on the miniature, but since we have to choose between their validities, we must surely adhere to that of the portrait. Drake sat for it, and ate his dinner under it when it was finished, and it seems only reasonable to suppose that he would have noticed the error with regard to his age, had there been one. A copy of it also was made for Plymouth in the year 1616, which bears the same inscription, and we may in fact regard it as being the "official" portrait.

[1] Stow, *Annals*, ed. 1615, p. 807.

[2] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 412.

The miniature, on the other hand, though no doubt painted from life, cannot have the authority of the full-length portrait painted for the sitter. He was, at the time the miniature was painted, just back from his circumnavigation of the world ; there was no more famous figure in Europe than he, and, as Stow tells us, " many princes of Italy, Germany, and others, as well as enemies and friends in his lifetime, desired his picture." [1] Pictures of him, in fact, must have been as ubiquitous as those of the Duke of Wellington after Waterloo, or (with due allowance made for the facilities of modern reproduction) of Carpentier or Mlle. Lenglen.

There remains, then, the discrepancy between Stow's first statement and the Buckland Abbey portrait. If, with Sir Julian Corbett, we accept 1546 as Drake's correct birth-year, he died at the age of fifty, and we are thus faced with the astonishing conclusion that he sat for the Buckland Abbey portrait three years after he was dead. But Stow also says that he was fifty-five when he died ; this gives us 1541 as his birth-year, and thus confirms, instead of contradicting, the evidence of the portrait.

The correctness of his age as inscribed on the portrait is further strengthened by several small corroborations. Nuño da Silva, for instance, the Portuguese pilot who accompanied Drake for part of his voyage of circumnavigation, tells us that Thomas Drake, the youngest of the twelve brothers, of whom Francis was the eldest, was twenty-one years old in 1577,[2] and must therefore have been born in 1556. As there is no mention of any of the intervening ten brothers being twins, it is difficult to imagine that the eldest was not born before 1546. He also says that in 1579 Drake himself was thirty-eight. On the whole, then, the date on the Buckland Abbey portrait, in itself the most authoritative, and

[1] Stow, *Annals*, p. 808.

[2] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 301.

thus supported, may be taken to be almost certainly correct, and we may accept Drake's birth-year as being 1541. Not even the name of his mother is known, but, in any case, both her identity and the actual year in which she brought forth her first-born are of infinitely small importance compared with what happened after Francis Drake was born. The event seems to have taken place in 1541, and on one night in that year I think there must have been portents in the heavens clearly visible from Madrid.

Very little unfortunately (and here we feel a loss far greater than any want of certainty about his birthday) is known concerning his early years, and we must still figure ourselves as jumping from tussock to tussock in a quagmire of conjecture, before we reach regions of stability where we can step out without fear of being bogged. His family was settled, as we know from his nephew, Sir Francis Drake, Bart., at South Tavistock, near Plymouth, and it is to this nephew (the son of Drake's youngest brother Thomas) and to the historian Camden, that we owe practically all the meagre materials with which to build up the structure of his childhood, and they require reinforcing with a little critical cement, for fear our building should totter. Drake was the eldest of the twelve sons of his father Edmund, and at the time of his birth, when his father occupied a labourer's cottage on the farm of Crowndale, the farm itself was leased from Lord Russell by his grandfather, John Drake. Crowndale had originally been part of the monastic lands of the Abbey of Tavistock, and at the dissolution of the monasteries had been presented by Henry VIII to the then Sir John Russell. We learn from Camden (who had such facts as he relates about Drake's early life from Drake himself) that Francis Russell, eldest son of Lord Russell, the owner of Crowndale, stood godfather at his christening. Though Francis Russell was then only a

boy of fourteen, there is ample precedent for so youthful a sponsor.

So much seems certain. The cottage on the Crowndale estate where Drake was born was still standing a hundred years ago, though no trace of it now remains, and its traditional identification is established by a map of the Bedford estate, on which is an asterisked note, "Here was born the great and celebrated Admiral Francis Drake," and here, while his grandfather held the Crowndale farm, Drake's early years were passed. He told Camden that his family were "in a small way," and his nephew, Sir Francis Drake, in his address to the reader in *Sir Francis Drake Revived*, calls attention to the power of God in exalting "so mean a person in low condition." The attempt, therefore, that has been made to elevate the family, as it then was, into "county gentry" is quite inconsistent with these first-hand data, and the appreciator of real romance will delight in the fact that so amazing a career was self-made. It is true that in some undetermined degree he was kinsman to the family of Hawkins at Plymouth, merchants and shipowners, and that he held one of his earliest commands at sea under John Hawkins, who was destined to be one of the great sailors of the day. But this was a most disastrous adventure, while the last on which the two sailed together was more disastrous yet. Throughout Drake's life it was his own genius that built his fortunes: his association with John Hawkins was always more a handicap than a help. For the present, as far as Drake's very early years are concerned, his father was the younger son of a tenant farmer, and lived in a labourer's cottage on his farm.

But *terra firma*, in these annals of Drake's boyhood, is still some distance off; we are still playing blind-man's-buff in boggy places, and catching what we can. Camden, again on information received from Drake,

tells us that Edmund Drake was a staunch Protestant, and had to leave Tavistock, flying for his life, for fear of the Six Articles Act of Henry VIII. That is reasonable enough, for the Six Articles Act was in favour of Catholics, but we find to our dismay that it was passed in the year 1539. If, then, Drake's father had to fly from Tavistock in the year 1539, taking with him, as Camden also tells us, his first-born son, Francis Drake, who was then "of tender years," Francis must have been born before 1539, and every other record regarding the year of his birth, including that sheet-anchor of the Buckland Abbey portrait, must be rejected. But that tragic sacrifice is not, we find, demanded, for Edmund Drake's name remains on the subsidy rolls of Tavistock for ten years yet, and disappears only in the year 1549.[1] It is clear, therefore, that Edmund Drake did not leave Tavistock for ten years after the date we infer from Camden's statement.

Now the fact of Edmund Drake having to leave Tavistock owing to some religious persecution is testified to, not by Camden alone, but by Sir Francis Drake, nephew and eventually heir of the Admiral. He, however, says nothing about the Six Articles Act, but only that Edmund Drake "suffered from persecution," and was forced to fly from Tavistock into Kent. On the flight from Tavistock, then, owing to religious persecution the two are agreed: they agree also that he fled into Kent. Camden furthermore tells us that after his flight he read prayers to the seamen of the King's Navy, and Nephew Francis adds that he lived in the "hull of a ship wherein many of his younger sons were born. He had twelve in all." But it is clear that he did not leave Tavistock in 1539, since he remains on the roll till 1549, and, very conveniently, we find that in 1549 there

[1] Lady Eliott Drake, *Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake*, vol. i. p. 20.

occurred an event which would perfectly account for his flying from Tavistock in that year under stress (as both Camden and Nephew Francis testify) of religious persecution. For on Whitsunday 1549 the first Prayer Book of Edward VI, which was a counterblast against the "idolatrous rite" of the Mass, was ordered to be read in all churches.[1] The effect of this was that wherever in England the old religion was still clung to, there was strong protest, amounting in some localities to an insurrectionary outburst against the innovation. The "idolatrous rite" of the Mass, abhorred by the New Protestants, was still deeply enshrined in the faith of the country, and in the prohibition to adore the Body of the Lord as exhibited in the consecrated wafer, the central tenet of the old faith was denounced. At Tavistock, where the country folk had grown up in the shadow and protection of the Abbey, feeling ran so high that Lord Russell, the new owner of the lands of the monastery, though sent down by the King to restore order, could get no further, owing to the flaming hostility of the countryside, than Honiton, fifty miles away. A sort of crusade in favour of the old religion was proclaimed, and from all the country round Protestant refugees flocked into Plymouth, pursued by the crusading rebels.

In view, then, of the fact that Edmund Drake certainly did not leave Tavistock in 1539, but remained there till 1549, when he did leave, it appears highly probable that he left in this year (as we otherwise know) under stress of religious persecution, which is exactly what we want. This supposition also allows us to accept the information that he took with him his eldest son Francis, then a child of eight, instead of rejecting it for the weighty reason that his eldest son was not yet born. There was, too, in this year a widespread clamour for the restoration of the Six Articles Act, and thus Camden's

[1] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 63.

assertion that Edmund Drake had to fly from Tavistock in consequence of a religious persecution concerning the Six Articles would be a very mild misunderstanding on his part, and the fact would be substantially correct, for the flight from Tavistock was certainly connected with the Six Articles.

But into Plymouth itself the trouble followed. Already there was a large population there of farmers and factors dispossessed from monastic lands, and as the tide of pursuers and refugees surged up, the Mayor opened the gates of the town. The Protestants seem to have been in a minority, for the rioting got serious, and a squadron of ships was sent to establish order. Plymouth was certainly no tranquil home for a hot Protestant with a growing family of small children, ranging from eight years old downwards, and Edmund Drake migrated into Kent, where we find him next living in the hull of a ship, and saying prayers to the sailors of His Majesty's ships on the Medway.

The mists begin to lift and disclose firm and picturesque substantialities instead of the shadows among which we have been groping. No fitter setting can be imagined for the child to whom English sea-power was to owe more than to any other of its immortal admirals, than these early years in some dismantled ship in the roadstead of the fleet on the Medway. We may picture it drawn up high and dry on the beach, or, perhaps more probably, anchored by some quay-side, afloat at high water, and stranded by the ebb. All Drake's life through, ships were to be his home, and already a ship's deck was the roof of the house of his young boyhood. Playing there he could wonder at the spiked tiller, where now the family washing hung to dry, but which once had majestically steered a way round stormy headlands and through the breakers of the menacing seas. Perhaps the bow-

sprit would be left, and he climbed precariously out along it, and in the theatre of childish imagination saw himself busy with the sheets of the foresail while it dipped into the crest of a wave and rose again with a spent whiff of spray. According to one tradition, his father, in earlier life, had been a sailor, and for the purposes of our picture we may accept this highly improbable legend, and imagine him showing the boy how the rigging was woven from ship's side to mast, and how the grim mouths of guns once yawned through the ports. Sea and ships, with his father reading prayers to the sailors, was the immediate environment of his early boyhood, and for dimmer background, the story of the flight from the remembered farm at Tavistock. He would not be old enough to attach any definite meaning to religious persecution, but there would be a vague impression that it had something to do with going to church, and a more substantial one that those monstrous Catholics had been his father's enemies. But the stronger colouring would be tides and waters and ships, and those that go down to the sea in ships.

There remains only one more difficulty to tackle, one more knot to unravel, before we get the very thin thread of the family history of Drake's early life to run smooth. Camden states that his father was subsequently ordained deacon and appointed vicar of Upnor. The difficulty is that there never was a church at Upnor, and it seems quite certain that Camden's "Upnor" is a clerical error for Upchurch, which is on the Medway, and "the road," as he himself says, "where the fleet usually anchored." To support this, we have the narrative in which John Cooke described the first part of Drake's circumnavigation of the world, which was dictated to the chronicler Stow, and is in his handwriting. At the end of it is a note, also in Stow's handwriting, "For Francis Drake knight sone to Sir . . . Drake, vickar of

Upchurch in Kent." This is confirmed by an entry in the Lambeth Registers, which records the induction of Edmund Drake as vicar of Upchurch in 1560, and by Edmund Drake's will made in December 1566, in which he describes himself as Vicar of Upchurch.[1] With such evidence before us, the emendation of Upchurch for Upnor seems certain. One of Edmund Drake's sons, Edward, was buried there, and he himself died early in 1567.

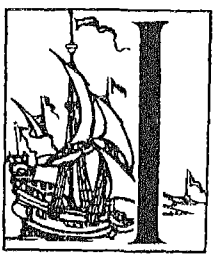
It is improbable, however, that Francis Drake ever lived in the vicarage at Upchurch, for, as he told Camden, his father by reason of his poverty apprenticed him to the master of a bark which coasted along English shores, and occasionally carried merchandise to Zeeland and France. Since Francis would have been nineteen when his father became vicar of Upchurch, his apprenticeship must almost certainly have taken place before that, and he passed from the house of his early boyhood on the family ship to the sea, which henceforth was far more truly his home than the land. There, no doubt in a rough and severe school, full of hardship and privation, he learned the business of his life, and, so Camden tells us, "the youth being painful and diligent, so pleased the old man by his industry, that being a bachelor, at his death he bequeathed his bark unto him by will and testament."

Such was Francis Drake's first command.

[1] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i p. 413.

CHAPTER II

DRAKE'S FIRST SIGHT OF THE INDIES



IT has always been the laudable fashion of the biographer to be not biographer only, but a sort of cursory national historian concerning the years of his hero's childhood and youth. He dilates on the social, the political, the religious ideas that were then determining the evolution of the country, and traces to their influence certain characteristics in the mental and moral equipment of his hero. More particularly, he insists on the force of early environment : if his hero has been brought up in the darkened day of coal-mining districts, and eventually becomes a philanthropist, we are asked to believe that his childish heart was wrung with pity for white faces and sooty hands, and that he formed a subconscious resolve to ameliorate these atrocious conditions. Or if his aunt recorded that at the age of six he killed a sparrow with a catapult, this bloody incident is apt to be held responsible for his subsequent career as a shooter of big game. . . . Childish complexes and phobias (or something to that effect in Freudian language), carefully unearthed, are held to be the sole determining factors of a life's work, and the child to be gripped, as in a vice, by the mandibles of his early impressions.

Now there is a great deal to be said for the moulding force of a child's early impressions. In many cases they can be shown or reasonably conjectured to have had a

profound influence on the tastes, if not the character, of a grown man, but they are influences the force of which may easily be exaggerated. More particularly is this the case when character, not tastes, is involved, for character is a very adamantine thing, and is developed by repeated shocks of internal compulsion, rather than by the persuasive breeze of suggestion and environment. And the hardest and least malleable of all characters is that possessed by the strange force called genius. Genius has nothing to do with cleverness (as we account cleverness); it has nothing to do with stupidity (as we account stupidity). We have not the slightest idea what it is, for it is part of its nature to transcend explanation. All we know of it is that no agglomeration of talents will evolve it, and that it is almost impervious to the influence of its surroundings. Hundreds of trite instances of this will occur to anybody. There was a carpenter's shop in the first century, and a chemist's shop in the last. Out of one came Christ, and out of the other Keats.

Now Francis Drake was that mysterious being which we call a genius; childish surroundings and movements in national life no doubt whispered in his ear and caused him to make notes of what they suggested, but it would be a great mistake to suppose, as his biographers have been rather apt to do, that the events and environments of his childhood determined his career. He mistily knew, as we have seen, with the comprehension of his eight years, that unpleasant people called Catholics were the cause of his father's leaving Tavistock, but he did not for that reason determine to be the life-long foe of Catholicism, nor can we, without a blush for our cheap psychology, suppose that, as he trudged into Plymouth holding his father's hand, his grey eyes (which the wanton enthusiast insists were blue) flashed into a resolve that he never subsequently forgot. Indeed, if he ever in

those years gave a thought to the reason of the family migration, he must have blessed the cause, whatever it was, which led to his living in a ship instead of among the monotonous meadows of a farm. Had the cause of Protestantism burned in his blood, making it boil with hatred against the Catholics, he would surely have gone winging home when his father was made vicar of Upchurch, and been a preacher too, and have taken Anglican orders, and perhaps have become a bishop. But again, this marine environment, so far more attractive than the farm at Crowndale, with its novelty of lodging and its hourly surprises of ebb and flow, was not that which determined him to be a sailor. He was pitchforked into a bleak apprenticeship on the little coasting bark, because his father was too poor to support a boy who at the age of fourteen or so might be earning his own living. That he met his destiny there is undeniable; his genius found on the sea the theatre of stupendous adventure for which it thirsted; but it was his father's poverty, not his own imperious demand, that was the determining factor.

Similarly, it would be a mistake to believe that the father's preachings and pieties, or the zeal of that "hot Gospeller" forged in the son that faith in God which, without the slightest doubt, was the mainspring which gave drive to those desperate and successful hazardings against immense odds which he was always ready to undertake. Not once, not a dozen times, but always with the utmost consistence and sincerity, he knew and declared himself to be the instrument of the Divine Will, and in that assurance brought to a triumphant close adventures which no other kind of man would have attempted. But it was not the pious father nor readings of the Bible in the hull at Upchurch which gave him that untarnishable conviction: indeed, such influences are usually found to produce a very dissimilar effect.

If ever a man believed in God, not from precept or Bible reading, but from some internal necessity, that man was Francis Drake.

Let us not then imagine him as a boy of fourteen seizing the opportunity of becoming a prentice lad on a small trading bark, as the first step towards being an English admiral and sweeping the sea clean of the oceanic castles of the Spaniards, through whose cursed Catholicism his father had been driven from his sweet home at Tavistock. Nothing could be more false to actual fact, or, which is worse, to the psychology of Drake. He went to sea because his father could not afford to keep him at home, and he no more hated Catholicism than he hated cannibalism. But then, without doubt, the life of the sea began to beat in his blood, and because he was a strong handy lad and stuck to his work, and because also his master was a seafaring bachelor who took a great fancy to the boy, he became, at the old man's death, the owner of this little vessel. He had, so both Stow and Fuller tell us, an amazing memory, and, without calling on the misleading guidance of imagination, we may picture him as having acquired and retained from these adolescent years a considerable knowledge of the shifting winds, the treacherous shoals and the snake-like currents and tides of the English Channel. But, in the name of psychological sobriety, let us not imagine him as indulging in blue-eyed day-dreams of driving a Spanish Armada to its doom with the fire-ships that caused the great galleons to cut their cables and drift like impotent whales on to the shoals where they stranded. His hatred of Spain was of later birth, and it so happens that we know precisely what the origin of it was.

But we may allow ourselves to conjure up some idea of what his physical appearance was when first as master of his small craft he slipped about the English coast

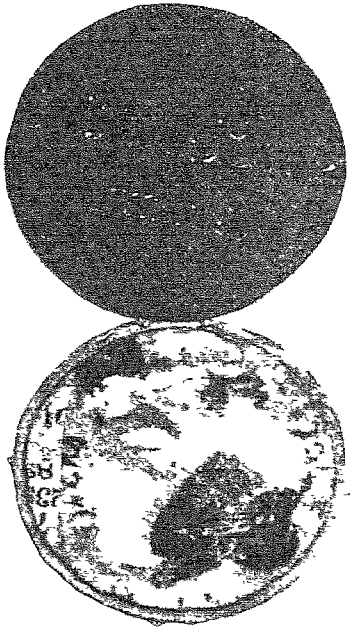
or took a cargo across to Calais. Stow gives a sketch of him when come to man's estate, from which we gather the general set of him : "lowe of stature, of strong limbe, broad-breasted, round-headed, brown hayre, full-bearded, his eyes round, large and clear, well-favoured fayce, and of a cheerful countenance."[1] This accords very well with the impression we get from the much later Buckland Abbey portrait, and from Lord Derby's miniature, and in particular from the miniature by Isaak Oliver, in possession of the Drake family. There he is, beardless as yet, and with only a thin line of moustache. Very noticeable points in this and other portraits are the humorous and whimsical mouth, and a dancing vitality in the eyes which might break out at any moment into merriment, or equally into a tantrum of hot temper. In them all, too, we have a high-arched eyebrow : a look of alertness and surprise, as if he had just learned something of high and rather gleeful interest, and was eager without delay to act on it, and prepare, perhaps, a surprise for somebody else. In the portrait where his hands appear, they are large and long-fingered, good to grasp and to hold, and in all these representations of him, there is, as Stow remarked, a great breadth of chest, and the build is that of a heavy man, but of one active and well set up. No doubt his bulk increased with years, but even on his first boyish command of a vessel of his own, he must have been sturdy and stout-limbed, and of that hardiness and strength and untiring endurance which he so constantly showed in his adventures by land and sea. The brown hair, as we see from the early miniature, grew low on his forehead, and we can figure him tossing it back as some idea bubbled beneath it and his mouth rapped out an order which must instantly be obeyed, and in the performance of which he was always ready to give a hand. Drake had always to be doing something : he

[1] Stow, *Annals*, p. 807.

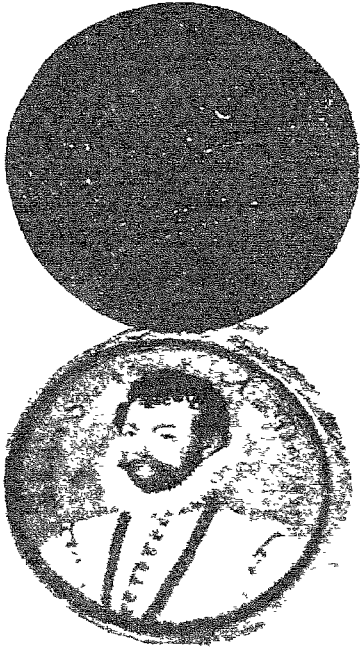
hated idleness, as one of his contemporary biographers tells us, like the devil, and we may be sure that the apprentice boy he took on his boat had to spring to his bidding with considerable liveliness. His temper was quick, and his tongue extraordinarily sharp, with a jest at the end when his impatience had vented itself. Everything round him, himself included, must be smart, for rust of any sort, mental or material, was to him intolerable. And when on shore there must be no dangling about pot-house or brothel : never had he any use for loose women, or for bawdy talk, though when it came to oaths, as friends and enemies have alike testified, there was no tongue so accomplished. No sea captain was more strict than he, and none so quick to punish, but he was just, and as quick to recognize merit and industry, and there was a pat on the back for a willing boy as often as he did not deserve a clout on the head.

And assuredly he " had a way with him " : that indefinable quality called charm was certainly his, and those who served under him adored him [1] in spite of the iron discipline. None could help trusting a man who had so complete a confidence in himself, and who by that quality so often emerged triumphant out of the most desperate situations. But the root of his self-confidence was the conviction that he was in God's hands, and was doing God's work. Sincere all through, that was the very flower and felicity of his nature. He was not one to rest on his oars ; no sooner was one task achieved than he found another awaiting accomplishment. In this unceasing pursuit, though he never spared others, he never spared himself, but worked harder than any one at the meanest drudgery, and that is the kind of man whom men love to serve. Faults he had in plenty : he was overbearing and imperious with his equals, he was hopelessly impatient of restraint, and incapable of

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, pp. 200-1.



THE HILLIARD MINIATURE
OF SIR FRANCIS DRAKE



In the possession of the Earl of Derby

co-operation, and if he never forgot a loyal friend, he never forgave an injury, nor ceased to pray God to help him to avenge it. He had the most violent temper, his thirst for honour was insatiable, he bragged and bawled, and he delighted in flattery. But behind it all was that spirit of indomitable pluck and gaiety, which seems to have frankly intoxicated those who came in contact with it.

Such in brief were the most outstanding of his qualities, and all these must have been there when first he commanded his little coasting bark, for they were the essential and abiding ingredients of his character, qualities that were not acquired by experience, but were the tingling sap of his nature. They grew and matured, no doubt, as he developed, but like his power of instantaneous decision, which often pulled him out of the tightest places, they were not the fruit of adventure, but the origin and cause of it. Already his ambition was chafing for a larger sphere of expansion than this pottering about the coasts of the Channel ; he knew those narrows now, and in that prodigious memory of his there was stored, for a future use that he surely never suspected, the riddles of its currents and its shoals and shifting winds.

The first opportunity for arriving on a larger stage came in 1564 or 1565. A certain Captain John Lovell, possibly a captain in the Hawkins firm of merchant vessels, was sailing for the West Indies, that new and fabulous El Dorado, and Drake either laid up his boat or sold it, and went with him as second in command. Next to nothing is known about the voyage ; Drake himself appears never to have given any account of it to historian or biographer, except that at Rio de la Hacha, a port on the Spanish Main, he suffered some wrong at the hands of the Spanish. What that precisely was is a matter of conjecture, but since ship and sailors returned

safely, it seems fairly certain that the wrong in question was that the Spanish authorities, acting on the prohibition then in force that the West Indian colonies should trade only with Spain, confiscated the cargo. The sole significance of the voyage, as far as we are concerned, is that it gave Drake his first sight of the West Indies, and that this incident first kindled in him that fire of hostility against the Spanish which till the end of his life was never quenched. But while he disappears for the time on this unchronicled voyage, it will be convenient to give some short general survey of the situation just then beginning to develop, which led, so largely through him, to the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the foundation of English sea-power, by a logic as ruthless and inevitable as that which, out of Germany's delirious military dreams of a World Empire, deduced the war of 1914 and the downfall of the Central European states.

Spain was then at the height of her power, which overshadowed Europe to an extent unknown since the Roman Empire towered over it. She did not maintain her grip on the world by the mere material strength of her army, never yet seriously tested, or of her hitherto unchallenged Navy, for at her back was the whole power of the Papacy. Spain was easily the most valuable of the Pope's spiritual kingdoms, and though the church of the Vicar of Christ was in Rome, the vicarage, so to speak, was in Madrid. Voyages and annexations had lately brought under the Spanish sceptre new territories of wealth actually fabulous and multiplied by fable into the treasure-houses of fairyland, and Papal bulls and Briefs had partitioned between Spain and Portugal the whole of the New World already discovered, with inalienable rights over its gold and its spices, its coasts and continents, and by way of bonus had assigned jointly to these two nations the seas of the entire world. The Mediterranean, the Atlantic,

the Pacific, the Indian Oceans were all private lakes on the estates of these fortunate countries. On land they had their separate spheres ; a fine big map was spread before Holy Father, and to Portugal he devised the East Indies, Brazil, and the whole of Africa south of the Canaries : the rest of the new world and the sovereignty of any future extension of it was declared to be the property of good King Philip and his heirs for ever. So also was the crown and kingdom of England when he had conquered it by the great invincible Armada, whose object, as the Lord General of the King's fleet, the Duke of Medina Sidonia declared, was "to serve God, and to return into his church a great many of contrite souls that are oppressed by the heretics."[1] God's glory was to be served by the death under the lash and the torture of all those heretics over the age of seven. Those younger were to be branded with an L (Lutheran) on their foreheads and kept as slaves,[2] and King Philip should sit on his English throne. Truly the Vicar of Christ had fine presents to bestow upon the faithful, and he bestowed them "on the authority of God and the fullness of Apostolic power." To us now such assumption of terrestrial omnipotence on the part of "the first clergyman in Europe" appears only a sad lack of humour, but to the sixteenth century there was nothing humorous about it : such bulls were solemnly read to the Consistory Court, and henceforth had the validity of law in the great parish. With equal solemnity of fulmination did Pius v confirm these dealings with the naughty little island in the North Sea, which had declared that it belonged no more to the parish. In 1570 he promulgated the stupendous "Regnans in Excelsis," in which he excommunicated Elizabeth, declared her to be a usurper without right of sovereignty, and very kindly

[1] Harleian Miscellany, vol. i. p. 115.

[2] Samuel Clark, *The Spanish Invasion*, p. 60.

absolved her subjects from obedience. Sixtus v, who was Pope at the time of the Armada, endorsed his predecessor's decrees with remarkable gusto.[1]

Now in England just then room and opportunity for the expansion of her trade had become an essential of national growth, and there was bubbling in her veins that spirit of adventure of which Drake was destined to be the chief and most typical incarnation. As if with the intention of corking and wiring down that effervescent force, Spain and Portugal had forbidden all other nations to trade with the ports of their western dominions, and thus the new outlet for the spirit of adventurous commerce was closed. The very sea, too, had been declared by the Pope to be the private road of his favourite children, and something had to be done. Something indeed was being done already : the foundations of commercial expansion and of the larger expansion of English sea-power were already laid, and engineers and builders were at work. Chief among them was the firm of Hawkins, a family related in some way to Drake, for the chroniclers allude to them as kinsmen, though the degree of the kinship is only a matter of conjecture. They were merchants and shipowners of Plymouth, whose business was to send out ships on commercial and trading ventures, financing them by forming syndicates of shareholders, who partook in the profits of the voyage in proportion to their investments. William Hawkins the elder, who died in 1555, was, though not the founder, the first member of the firm of whose operations we know anything. He had sat on a naval commission in the time of Henry VIII, and before this embargo was put on foreign trading in the Spanish and Portuguese ports had made successful voyages to the coasts of Guinea and Brazil. After his death the firm was carried on by his two sons, William and John, the latter and most famous

[1] Harleian Miscellany, vol. i. p. 144.

of whom made immense profits for his shareholders in two voyages. Then came the embargo, which, coupled with the Pope's pronouncement, was not only a violation of the trading treaties between Spain and England, but of the doctrine, hitherto invariably accepted, of the freedom of the high seas.

Philip took up an utterly illogical position over this, when, in one breath, he laid the embargo on English trading with the West Indies and Spanish Main, and also denied that he had broken the existing commercial treaties. For these gave free right of trade to the Spanish on English territories, and to the English on Spanish, and thus if he had not violated (as he maintained) these commercial treaties, it was clear that the shores and ports of his new Western Empire were not Spanish territory. But to suppose that for this reason Elizabeth sanctioned the series of raids which Drake was to deliver on Spanish soil in America, on the grounds that they were not Spanish soil, is to misunderstand her methods altogether. Legal subtleties were quite alien to her : her only principle was to pilfer and pillage as much as she could without provoking Philip into making war. She was perfectly ready, when strong enough at sea, to sanction raids on ports in Spain, which were a definite act of war. But then she hoped that such success would attend Drake's raids on the Spanish coasts as to prevent Philip retaliating.

On this side of the Atlantic English ships had for some time been carrying on a trade in gold dust on the Gold Coast and the shores of Guinea. The Hawkins firm had already made several successful voyages there, and the natives in adjoining districts cared as little for the embargo as the English, whom they found to be reliable and honest in their dealings. To this trade in gold dust John Hawkins now added a further branch of enterprise, namely, the extremely lucrative business of trading in slaves. Labour was badly wanted in the new Spanish

dominions in America, where native labour was insufficient, and slaves fetched a very high price there. So lucrative indeed was the industry that, in addition to the embargo on foreign trade of all kinds, Spain did not even allow her own subjects free trading in this valuable merchandise, but a royal licence had to be purchased, and a high import duty was charged per head on the importations. Far from the slave trade being regarded as an accursed and inhuman traffic, it was universally considered as respectable as any other form of commerce, and when John Hawkins was granted a coat-of-arms by Elizabeth on his appointment as Paymaster of the Navy, his crest was "a demi-moor properly coloured, bound by a cord," in order fitly to symbolize his creditable achievements in this line. Odder yet is the fact that Elizabeth herself was a shareholder in some of these monstrous expeditions, for, in 1564, she had provided the "Minion," a ship of the Royal Navy, to take part in one of them. According to the invariable custom in these syndicates, a valuation was put on the "Minion," and the Queen's share thereby computed. Her habitual parsimony, however, in this instance was largely responsible for her subsequent chagrin, for the "Minion," cheaply refitted at the Queen's charges, proved to be very unseaworthy, and her captain, encountering bad weather, thought it more prudent to return without her dividends. All this seems very strange to our modern notions: the imagination boggles at the picture of Queen Victoria lending a man-of-war to take part in contraband trading, especially if we consider that the merchandise it was to carry was that of natives bought or kidnapped from the coasts of Africa (which belonged to a nation with whom she was at peace), and carried off to work in the mines of Mexico. Oddest perhaps of all was the view taken of the whole business by the Church, for we find the saintly missionary, Las Casas,

strongly in favour of operations which took the poor benighted heathens of Africa from the darkness of their paganism, to find light and salvation under the lash and the loving care of the Holy Inquisition.

Such, in any case, was the current view taken by honest merchants, by sovereigns, and by spiritual pastors with regard to the slave trade, and John Hawkins, with his Queen as a shareholder, was engaged in expeditions of this sort in the early sixties, when Drake was just come to man's estate. One of these, in 1562, had promised huge success : his fleet sailed with English merchandise on board, he kidnapped three hundred negroes on the coast of Sierra Leone, and with a Portuguese pilot took them to the Spanish dominions across the Atlantic, and (having paid nothing for them) disposed of them at a colossal profit. He invested the proceeds in a cargo of precious spices, but most injudiciously sent it to be sold in Spain. The authorities, aware of the true origin of this cargo, instantly confiscated it, and the blaze of triumph with which Hawkins and his accounts had been hailed by his shareholders was abruptly extinguished. Diplomatic relations between Spain and England grew strained over such incidents, and a further expedition of Hawkins's had to be abandoned, for de Silva, Spanish Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, made a personal complaint to the Queen. She, of course, vowed that she had had no idea that Hawkins was engaged in contraband trade, and would certainly speak very severely to him about it. The pearls she was wearing, which had been the pleasant fruit of one of his ventures, could not contradict her, neither could His Excellency, for, short of telling her that she lied, he had to accept her word, and this he appears to have done, though he subsequently wrote a more candid despatch to his royal master about the incident. And when that Cretan interview was over,

she sent for Hawkins, as she had promised, and gave him a good talking to. After she had explained how shocked she was, I think she fingered the pearls, and a royal wink was vouchsafed him.

But wisdom—that timid, tortuous hole-and-corner wisdom of the Queen—dictated the abandonment of the expedition that would have started in 1566, for she had no mind as yet to risk any definite rupture with her Brother of Spain. She wanted more ships first, and she was building them; she wanted more money, and though the thought of King Philip's fabulous treasures pouring into Spain from the golden West made her mouth water, it was more prudent just for the present, when the King seemed soberly to be entertaining those monstrous suspicions that she could possibly have anything to do with these contraband tradings, not to irritate him further. That was what she called diplomacy, namely, to tell lies that were not believed, and, while pilfering all that could safely be laid hands on, not to provoke King Philip too much. She had a great belief in this policy, and steadily pursued it.

Drake, during these years when the sort of broth we have indicated was beginning to bubble and to send forth those rich odours of the illimitable wealth of the new western kingdoms of Spain, had, as we have seen, gone on his first voyage to the Indies. It was an unfortunate venture; to the end of his life he nourished the sense of having been swindled, and scarcely a year passed without his amply repaying himself. He professionally consulted a chaplain on this point (those who identify this gentleman with Drake's father must prove their attractive hypothesis), who told him that on strictly theological grounds he was justified in reimbursing himself at the expense of the nation which had cheated him, and thus Drake had any possible scruple laid to rest, and robbing Spaniards became not only a pleasure

but a duty. He went on another small voyage, probably for gold dust, to the coast of Guinea, about which nothing is known, and in 1566 he was back in England again, and, coming up to London, went to see his kinsman, John Hawkins. Hawkins, of course, knew about the failure and fiasco of Captain Lovell's expedition, and to his cost, for in all probability he had financed it. He found in his young cousin just what the bachelor owner of the little coasting bark had found, a sturdy seaman, with knowledge of his trade, industrious and steady and strong, and to those good qualities there was now added the fixed resolve to get upsides with the folk who had cheated him at Rio de la Hacha. They had a talk; they had many talks.

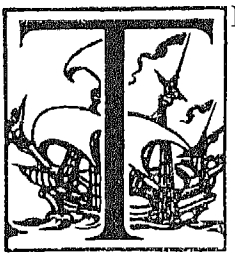
Now, since the Spanish Ambassador had made that remonstrance to the Queen which resulted in the abandonment of Hawkins's expedition, there had been no sign of any questionable activity in English ports, but in May 1567 His Excellency's suspicions were seemingly aroused again. There were merchant ships in Her Majesty's harbour at Chatham making ready in a quiet unostentatious manner to go to sea, and there were ships of Her Majesty's Navy doing the same. A little more investigation on his part revealed the presence of certain Portuguese pilots who had signed on for a voyage of unknown destination. His Excellency again sought audience of the Queen, who, in her most engaging manner, told him some wonderful cock-and-bull stories about the destination of this innocent little water-party. It was intended to explore African coasts, south—oh, ever so far south—of the Portuguese sphere, and when, a month or two later, the Ambassador received information that two of the ships of the Royal Navy, the "Jesus of Lubeck" and the "Minion," had sailed round to the wharf by the Tower of London and were taking in arms, Elizabeth entertained him with more pleasant

little histories. Simultaneously Hawkins, who was leaving London for Plymouth, paid a polite call on him, and desired his humble duty to be conveyed to His Majesty of Spain. But these little fibs and courtesies failed to establish any strong feeling of confidence in His Excellency's mind, for quite suddenly the Portuguese pilots who had been engaged for this trip vanished altogether, which was a curious thing. Just as odd, on the counter-side of this game, was the disappearance from Chatham of the Navy ships which had been taking in arms at the Tower. During September they sailed up the Sound at Plymouth, where four other merchant ships happened to be getting ready to go to sea, and off they all went on October 2nd, 1567. Among these was a vessel of fifty tons called the "Judith," and the captain of the "Judith" was Francis Drake.



CHAPTER III

THE SORROWFUL VOYAGE TO SAN JUAN D'ULUA



HE Queen, of course, knew what the real objective of the modest little squadron was, so, too, did her Council, and the Spanish Ambassador strongly suspected it in spite of the specious Gloriana. It was just such a voyage as those on which Hawkins had set sail before, and the programme was to purchase (or, preferably kidnap) negroes on the Portuguese coast of West Africa, which was the cheapest market, and sell them in the ports of New Spain, which was the dearest. Elizabeth was clearly a shareholder in the venture, since she supplied two ships from the Royal Navy, but never a pennyworth of dividend reached her pocket, for once again, as in Drake's voyage with Captain Lovell, the enterprise reaped a harvest of disaster, and Hawkins, who had put a pile of money into it, concludes his narrative concerning it in the most lugubrious vein. He wrote of it with a pessimism which was as characteristic of him as was optimism of his young kinsman :

" If all the miseries and troublesome affairs of this sorrowful voyage should be perfectly and thoroughly written, there should need a painful man with his pen and as great a time as he had that wrote the lives and deaths of the Martyrs." [1]

[1] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. x. p. 74.

This is language from the very marrow of melancholy, and indeed the voyage was disastrous for the English. But in its ultimate effects it was far more disastrous for the Spanish, for from that time forth, owing to their barbarous treachery, Drake consecrated his life to the destruction of Spanish sea power. Already the incident at Rio de la Hacha had lit the fire of his hatred, and from now till the end it blazed unquenchably. This troublesome voyage proved to be the prologue to the drama that culminated twenty-one years later in the shattering of the Spanish Armada.

The flagship of the fleet that now set out from Plymouth was the "Jesus of Lubeck," a vessel of 700 tons. She had been purchased from Lubeck by Henry VIII, and was classed among his "great ships": high-prowed, high-sterned, four-masted, with a broadside of guns on each side, and further batteries at her stern. As she had been condemned as not worth repairing in 1558, and the syndicate had to pay for her being refitted, the valuation of the "Jesus" at £4000 seems to have been a cheap investment for the Queen, and one quite after her own heart. The rest of her stake was the "Minion," also a "great ship" of 250 tons, which had already proved herself unseaworthy, and was also repaired at the cost of the syndicate. Thus the business-like Elizabeth stood to win a handsome profit if the adventure was successful, for she had got two ships repaired for nothing, while, if it was not, her loss would not be severe, for she had not put down a penny in cash, but only provided two obsolete and unseaworthy vessels. That ships of the Royal Navy should be used in commerce during times of peace was perfectly regular and usual: the only irregularity, which Elizabeth had certainly committed before, was that they should be used for contraband slave traffic. So she had assured de Silva that nothing of the sort was contemplated. . . . With these two Navy ships were four

other vessels, all classed as barks, namely, the "William and John" 150 tons, the "Swallow" 100 tons, the "Judith" 50 tons, and the "Angel" 32 tons.

To our great regret there did not accompany Hawkins any naturalist of such keen powers of observation as the unnamed gentleman who went with him on his expedition of 1564, but as the fleet visited the same places they probably saw much the same curiosities.[1] There was a tree that they heard of in the Canary Islands, and saw in abundance on the coast of Guinea. This singular vegetable "raineth continually, by the dripping whereof the inhabitants and cattle are satisfied with water, for other water they have none in all the island. And it raineth in such abundance that it were incredible unto a man to believe such a venture to be in a tree, but it is known to be a divine matter and a thing ordained by God." Similar trees on the Guinea coast did not rain so hard, because their leaves were narrower, but this was made up for by the unusual phenomenon of "flitting islands" that appeared and disappeared in a pleasing and mysterious manner. Then, at Cape Verde there were fish "with heads like conies, and of a jolly thickness," and men "who jagg their flesh as workmanlike as a Jerkin-maker with us pinketh a Jerkin," and in the rivers "crocodiles that sob and weep like a Christian body." This was very cunning of them, for when a Christian body came to see what ailed them, they gobbled him up. In Florida there were unicorns which dipped their horn in the water before they drank, and serpents with three heads and four feet. These interesting objects, we may hope, were all observed again, and there was added to them the curious oyster-tree, which had no leaves on it, but multitudes of oysters.

The voyage that was to end so disastrously started badly. They ran into storms off Finisterre, and the

[1] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. x. p. 13.

"Jesus," valued at £4000, suffered so much that Hawkins actually turned homewards, meaning to abandon the voyage. But the weather became "reasonable" again, and the fleet, scattered by the storm, regathered at Teneriffe (where under Nelson a more momentous gathering of English ships took place), to make its course for the African coast. On the way they fell in with a Portuguese caravel, and, soon after, with another which had already been captured by a French privateer, under the command of Captain Bland. Hawkins annexed both of these, and temporarily transferred Drake from the "Judith" [1] to one of them, a ship of 150 tons, which was piously rechristened "The Grace of God." So poor Captain Bland had to go and look for another. . . .

Now the capture of these ships (unrelated by Hawkins, who consistently omits questionable incidents) was an act of pure piracy, and it is as well at once to recognize it as such if we do not want to be shocked at Drake's subsequent career. Piracy for the next twenty years was not the peccadillo of the English sea captains, but their policy, sanctioned and abetted by the Queen, who shared in the profits, and it was this policy that, when Spain could stand it no longer, precipitated the Spanish Armada. Attack on ships at sea sailing under another flag was not then a *casus belli*: every nation with a fleet indulged in it, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English alike, and such attacks came under the general head of "reprisals" for similar acts in this chronic maritime vendetta. England had no fleet at this time (nor indeed for fifteen years more) which could possibly compete with Spanish sea-power, and, as we shall presently see, Hawkins had been privily instructed by the Queen not to commit any outrageous provocation, which might lead to war, against her Brother of Spain. But this

[1] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. ix. p. 446.

little act of appropriation against Portugal could not do any harm, especially since one of their appropriations had already been made by a French privateer. He was, of course, powerless against this considerable English squadron, and with the "Grace of God" conveniently augmenting the fleet, it went on its way, resuming the innocent though contraband rôle of slave-dealer.

Ill-luck pursued them: they arrived at the hunting-ground of the Guinea coast, and Hawkins landed a hundred and fifty men to capture negroes. But they obtained a mere handful of black merchandise, and that expensively, for the negroes shot many of the marauding party with poisoned arrows. Almost all who were wounded so as to draw blood died "in strange sort, with their mouths shut some ten days before they died, and after their wounds were whole," which suggests some alkaloid poisoning. Hawkins himself was badly wounded, but recovered after the application of a clove of garlic. But a second and more promising opportunity of collecting cargo presented itself, for the king of a native tribe asked Hawkins's help against a neighbouring rival, and agreed to give him all prisoners who were taken. A combined assault of English and negroes was made on the principal town of the hostile tribe, and it was captured and burned. Hawkins's men took two hundred and fifty prisoners, and their black ally six hundred, which the English claimed as the reward of their co-operation. But this perfidious monarch trekked off that night with all his booty, and Hawkins sadly remarks that this race is "habitually void of truth." This regret for their low moral standard comes oddly from a man who was stealing human beings to sell them beyond the sea, and it is no wonder that Dr. Johnson, who in his Life of Drake seldom fails to find some moral lesson in any action in which his hero takes part, omits this unedifying episode altogether.

With a final cargo (not quite coming up to expectations) of five hundred pieces, the squadron set sail for the West Indies in order to dispose of their goods to Spanish employers. They visited Domenica, Margarita, and other ports and islands, where, in spite of the official refusal on the part of the Spaniards to trade, they quietly disposed of some half of their cargo, and were approaching Rio de la Hacha, where Drake, now again in command of the "Judith," had two years before suffered some wrong at the hands of the Spaniards. He had, as we have seen, obtained professional advice about it, and had been told that he was perfectly justified, by divine as well as human law, in compensating himself at the expense of his injurers. That came in the Bible, quite early. And now Francis Drake was back at Rio de la Hacha in his first command on the high seas.

Now of what happened, and how it happened, at Rio de la Hacha, there are two accounts, totally unreconcilable. One is Hawkins's, the other that of Job Hartop, a gunner in the "Jesus of Lubeck," who, before the end of this voyage, fell into the hands of the Spanish, and returned to England, where he wrote his narrative, twenty-three years later. Though he had a fine imaginative eye in matters of natural history, we must, without question, accept his account of what happened at Rio de la Hacha sooner than that of his General. The incident, though of no great importance in itself, definitely brings Drake on to the foreground of the stage which he was to occupy with ever greater prominence till his coffin slid into the sea not far from this very spot.

Let us take Hawkins's account first. He writes[1] that on the arrival of his squadron at Rio de la Hacha, "the Treasurer who had the charge there would by no

[1] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. x. p. 66.

means agree to any trade or suffer us to take water ; he had fortified his town with divers bulwarks, and furnished himself with an hundred Harqu-buziers, so that he thought by famine to have forced us to put a-land our Negroes, of which purpose he had not greatly failed unless we had by force entered the town, which (after we could by no means obtain his favour) we were enforced to do."

Now Hawkins knew from Drake's experience with Lovell that he would probably have an unfriendly reception at Rio de la Hacha, and nothing is more unlikely than that so competent a commander should have arrived here with imperative need of watering. He had been coasting (and had been received without hostility) for some weeks, and he could scarcely have been in such sore want of water as he represents. More remarkable yet would be the superhuman ingenuity of the Treasurer. According to Hawkins's account, he must have been gifted with a sort of second sight, for he seems to have said to himself, " I have a feeling that the pirate Hawkins is approaching with a cargo of negroes, and that he will be in cruel want of water. I will therefore fortify my town, and get a hundred arquebus shooters, so that he will not be able to land. Lacking water, he must surrender, and I shall get his negroes for nothing. . . ." In fact, we cannot believe in the Treasurer, any more than we can believe that immediate and imperative want of water drove Hawkins to the painful step of taking the town. Hawkins, moreover, had been enjoined by the Queen (as he subsequently says himself) not to commit any act of open hostility to Spain, and since the bombardment and capture of a Spanish port might possibly be considered liable to misinterpretation as a sign of friendship, he puts all the blame on the Treasurer, saying that he refused to allow a friendly fleet, famished for want of water, to obtain it. Bitter

compulsion was the cause of his disobeying the Queen's orders.

Now let us hear what Job Hartop has to say[1]:

"Our General sent from thence (Curaçoa) the 'Angel' and the 'Judith' to Rio de la Hacha, where we anchored before the town. The Spaniards shot three pieces at us, which we requited with two of ours, and shot through the Governor's (Treasurer's?) house: we weighed anchor, and anchored again without shot of the town, where we rode four days in spite of the Spaniards and their shot. In the mean space there came a caravel of advice (despatch-boat) from S. Domingo, with whom the 'Angel' and the 'Judith' we chased and drove to the shore: we fetched him from thence in spite of 200 Spaniards harqubush shot, and anchored again before the town, and rode there with them, till our General's coming, who anchored, landed his men, and valiantly took the town. We landed and planted on the shore for our safeties, our field-ordinance: we drove the Spaniards up into the country above two leagues, whereby they were inforced to trade with our General, to whom he sold most part of his negroes."

Now this is a very different and much more credible story. We hear nothing about the sudden imperative need for water, nor do we have to accept the gifted and barbarous Treasurer. Instead, we have an exploit with the true Drakian touch. He already had a grudge against the Treasurer of Rio de la Hacha, and who can doubt that he got Hawkins to allow him to go ahead with the "Judith" and the "Angel," and pay an advance unofficial visit to the place? With his two little cockle-shells he swaggered into the harbour, provoked the Spaniards to fire, and planted a shot through the residence of that blackguard who had swindled him. Then, with the luck that invariably attended him when he was on his own, there came along a Spanish despatch boat which he drove ashore and captured. Then up came Hawkins,

[1] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. ix. p. 449.

who was not directly responsible for what Drake had done, and who, after this reconnaissance, took the town and disposed of the greater part of the remainder of his cargo. It was all strictly against the Queen's orders, and hence the story in his account of the need of water. Not till Job Hartop's return to England, twenty-three years later, did the true version come out, and by that time there was no longer any reason for concealing it. In fact, "Rio de la Hacha Revisited" was Drake's first independent exploit, many times to be repeated, of his operations, piratical and otherwise, against Spain.

With the cargo now nearly disposed of in this satisfactory manner, Hawkins called at Cartagena, but the Governor refused to trade with him; and since the season of storms was at hand, and this the zone of their fiercest raging, he turned homewards. But making a course to get into the Gulf Stream, they encountered such violent weather that the rickety "Jesus" sprang a bad leak, and had her rudder so damaged that the only chance of saving her was to put into some port on the coast of Florida. On their way they came across three ships carrying a hundred passengers, who, as hostages, would give them a better chance of obtaining supplies for the Atlantic voyage and a quiet harbour in which to effect repairs. With them on board, they entered San Juan d'Ulua by Vera Cruz, the port of the city of Mexico, and one of the starting points from which treasure ships sailed to Spain. The anchorage was on the lee of a small island, not much more than a shoal, which was the only protection against northerly gales.

There were lying there when the English ships entered twelve unarmed treasure ships, heavy with bullion from the mines of Mexico, and a Spanish squadron to escort them on the homeward voyage was expected. The officials of the port, mistaking Hawkins's ships for this

fleet, came alongside,[1] and, greatly astonished, perceived their error. Hawkins, obedient to the instructions he had received from the Queen, behaved with exemplary correctness. He pointed out that the port was in his hands, as also were the treasure ships which he learned contained gold to the value of two hundred thousand pounds. He had, moreover, on his ship a hundred hostages. But all he wanted was to put in for repairs and procure provisions for which he was ready to pay, and, that everything should be in order, he instantly despatched two of his crew to ride up to Mexico and inform the Governor that he had only put in from stress of weather, reminding him that the Queen of England was King Philip's loving sister and friend.

Whether the sight of those unarmed treasure ships would have relaxed Hawkins's correctness, it is impossible to say. But it was not put to test, for next morning there appeared off the harbour the expected Spanish escort, numbering "thirteen great ships." Hawkins at once sent a boat out to the flagship, repeating what he had said to the officials of the port, but adding that he could not permit the fleet to enter the harbour unless a guarantee was given that no attack should be made on the English. How Hawkins, with his small and damaged squadron, could thus dictate to "thirteen great ships" is clear enough, for a northerly gale was blowing, and he could easily hold the mouth of the harbour and just wait for the gale to drive the Spaniards on to a lee shore. He refrained from doing this, he states, for the same reason for which he had already refrained from rifling the treasure ships, namely, that to inflict so immense a damage on Spain would be contrary to the Queen's orders. On board the Spanish fleet was the new Viceroy of Mexico,

[1] Hawkins uses the word "a-board," but this is commonly employed to mean "alongside": it is also incredible that the Spanish officials should actually have come on deck before they saw their mistake.

Don Martino Enriquez, who, in the name of King Philip, gave the required assurance.

After ten hostages had been given on both sides, the Spanish fleet entered, saluting as it came in. Owing to the smallness of the harbour, it had to take up its moorings close to the English ships. During the next three days, while the English were busy with their repairs, it was observed that there was some strange activity going on in the Spanish ships : guns were being taken out and planted on land, and new port-holes were being cut on the Spanish broadsides which faced the English. Hawkins suspected treachery, and sent across to the Spanish flagship one of his crew who could speak the language, to ask what this meant. His arrival was the signal for an attack of amazing perfidiousness. Armed Spanish troops were landed, who killed all the defenceless English who were on shore, except those who escaped to the "Jesus" by swimming. Other troops swarmed from the Spanish ship lying next the English on to the " Jesus " and the " Minion," and the Spanish guns opened fire at point-blank. The " Minion," while the fight was still going on, slipped her cable ; the " Jesus," on which were all the proceeds of their trading, was so damaged that it was impossible to move her ; the " Angel " was sunk, and the " Swallow " was in no better plight than the " Jesus." Hawkins then abandoned the " Jesus," and with all the men he could tranship, embarked on the " Minion," signalling to Drake to come alongside with the " Judith " and take off the " Minion," already overcrowded with the sailors from the " Jesus," as many as he could, and get out of the harbour. The Spaniards meantime had suffered by their treacherous attack even more heavily than the English : they lost five hundred men killed, and four of their thirteen ships were sunk. Hawkins left the ten Spanish hostages unharmed on the " Jesus " : the English hostages in the hands of the

Spaniards were handed over with other prisoners to the Inquisition and brutally tortured.

Drake, in obedience to his orders, got clear of the harbour: outside the storm still raged, and next day he could see nothing of the "Minion," which was, in fact, at anchor under the lee of a small island. He had two courses open to him: the one to search for the "Minion," or lie-to, waiting for her reappearance, within easy reach of the Spanish fleet in the harbour from which Hawkins had ordered him to put out. The other was to attempt to save his ship and get back to England, and it was this he chose. As always, he made his decision, since a decision had to be made, without delay, and instantly acted on it.

Now Hawkins, in his melancholy account of this troublesome voyage, says that the "Judith" "forsook us in our great misery,"[1] and this sentence has been made the text for an attack on Drake's conduct as being unworthy of any gallant sailor. But no rendezvous had been given him in the rough-and-tumble of the fight, and to look for the "Minion" somewhere in the Atlantic, or to remain within reach of the Spanish fleet, would assuredly have been conduct worthy only of a demented sailor. His search, as Hawkins's subsequent movements proved, would have been like a hunt for a needle in a haystack, and, as Captain of the "Judith," he was bound to do his best for the safety of his ship: while to cruise about here, waiting for Hawkins to emerge from his anchorage, would have meant certain capture by the Spaniards. In view of Drake's character, which every year till his death was more incontestably established, it seems as reasonable to accuse him of want of courage as to accuse a fox (or Drake either for that matter) of want of cunning. Nothing could have been more cowardly on his part, if he had had the slightest chance of finding

[1] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. x. p. 72.

or helping the "Minion," than to have "forsaken" her, but he had no idea where she was. Nothing, on the other hand, could have been less cunning than to appear in England, with the "Judith" as the sole and half-starving remnant of the gallant armament that last year had set sail from Plymouth, if he had not an absolutely impregnable case to present. But he never even had to defend himself; his story was that of a captain performing his obvious duty, and Hawkins, who after more hardships and troubles returned home with the "Minion," had nothing to say against him. Indeed, the phrase "the 'Judith' forsook us," which has been saddled with an ugly motive, really bears no such interpretation, for another account of the voyage merely records that the "'Judith' lost us."[1] No wonder: for the "Minion" was ensconced behind the little island where it had taken shelter from the storm which Drake rode out. Finally, it was Hawkins's business to look for the "Judith," rather than the other way about. Such at least was Drake's invariable practice when a vessel of his had parted company from the flagship.

Drake had sold the little coasting bark, on which he had learned the moods and temper of the Channel, before he went out on this disastrous voyage with his kinsman, John Hawkins. He had invested in it such exiguous capital as was his, and penniless he went out, and penniless he returned, for his share in the proceeds, like that of his illustrious co-shareholder, Queen Elizabeth, had been in the "Jesus," which, riddled with shot, was abandoned at San Juan, in consequence of the infamous treachery of Don Martino Enriquez. The name, therefore, of Don Martino Enriquez was written in that perfect memory of his with a very black mark against it. He had visited Rio de la Hacha, and had done something to square that account, but without

[1] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. ix. p. 408.

personal compensation. But now this was a far more serious item on the debit side, and whatever he could secure of that debt, even though he repaid himself sixty-fold and a hundred-fold, would not liquidate it. The ships of his kinsman's squadron had been attacked and fired on while the ink of the contract in which Don Martino Enriquez had guaranteed their immunity in his own name and that of his King, was not yet dry ; his comrades ashore had been foully murdered, and, had he known it, those who were left in the " Jesus," and those whom Hawkins subsequently landed at their own desire, were already in the hands of the most Christian Inquisition. The few survivors came back to England many years later, with such stories of tortures and mutilations as make us wonder whether Sadism, the lust for inflicting pain, or Catholicism in the name of the Love of God was responsible for such bestialities. To one there was assigned two hundred stripes on horseback, so he was stripped to the waist and tied on a horse which was led through the streets of Mexico, while this just chastisement for being English and of the Protestant faith was administered to him for the salvation of his soul. If he survived his soul's salvation, eight years in the galleys would confirm it. For a more obstinate case there were three hundred lashes, and ten years' meditation in the galleys : another was hung up by his hands to a tree till the blood spirted from his finger nails, and others were burned. Of the fate of these Drake as yet knew nothing, though similar stories of the most Christian Inquisition were familiar to him, but what he had himself seen and suffered from at the hands of the gentlemen of Spain was sufficient to make the furnace of hate and vengeance reverberate. He had served his apprenticeship, henceforth he led his adventures himself.

Such was his return from this troublesome voyage. He knew nothing of the fate of the " Minion " : the

" William and John " had been lost in the storm which drove them into San Juan of evil and imperishable memory, and in San Juan there had been left, some sunk, some riddled with shot and helpless, the whole of the rest of the squadron which had left the Sound at Plymouth more than a year ago. The " Judith " of fifty tons returned alone, battered and short of victuals. But Drake was in her.

Drake took with him on his voyage round the world, in 1577, a smart new drum. When he returned from that voyage three years later, and was knighted by Elizabeth, he had his new coat-of-arms painted on that drum which had been round the world with him : perhaps it was to him what we should now call his " mascot." But before the drum took material shape it was beating in his brain. It sounded there as he navigated homewards the solitary little " Judith," and the drum-taps were the music to which he marched henceforth in his life-long war against the chiefest and most damnable of all Christian countries. It beat death to Spain, but to Drake an invincible gaiety of resourcefulness.



CHAPTER IV

DRAKE'S DRUM IS HEARD ON THE SPANISH MAIN



OTHING had been heard in England of this expedition of John Hawkins's which started in October 1567, until, on the 20th January 1569, the "Judith," overcrowded and under-victualled, limped into Plymouth alone. Drake went straight to William Hawkins, now head of the firm, and elder brother of the leader of this unfortunate venture, and told him the story, as far as he knew it. William Hawkins packed him off to London with a letter to the Queen's Council, demanding reprisals. It was likely to receive Her Majesty's attention, for she had certainly lost the "Jesus" (£4000); God knew what had happened to the "Minion," and where were her dividends, not to mention her capital? Five days after Drake's departure for London, John Hawkins crawled into Mount's Bay in Cornwall with the "Minion." Sickness had decimated his crew, the Spaniards had got the money he had received for his slaves, and so sea-weary was the "Minion" that Brother William must send assistance to tow her into Plymouth.[1]

Then he bustled Brother John up to town to add his sorry sequel to the letter already despatched. It would require, in Hawkins's opinion, the industry of the man

[1] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. pp. 124, 125.

who wrote the lives of the martyrs to do adequate justice to his sufferings, but he set to work himself, and produced the narrative which we have, with reservations, been following.

Now during the few months previous to Drake's return, an interesting political situation had arisen. Politics would seem to be highly alien to any life of Drake, for though in later life he represented Plymouth and also Tintagel in Parliament, they had no more interest for him than philosophy. But this, like many other subsequent political situations, had a direct bearing on his next adventure, and must be briefly indicated.

Two months before (*i.e.* at the end of November 1568) certain ships from Spain, with bullion on board, had put into Plymouth as a port of refuge from French privateers. The gold they carried was destined for Antwerp : some of it was the discharge of trading debts due to certain merchants there, but the greater part of it was pay for the troops of the Duke of Alva, who was the Spanish governor of the Netherlands, and in all it amounted to £100,000.[1] But when the new Spanish Ambassador in London, Don Guerau de Spes, asked that this money should be given safe conduct through England and re-embarked again at Dover, it had already become known to Elizabeth that the greater part of it was a loan raised to pay Alva's army, and Alva's army was a menace to England. She could never, moreover, bear to let go of a single sixpence which had come in touch with her retentive fingers, and in one way and another made delays about granting this permission. She did not object to the Antwerp merchants receiving the payments due to them, but, so the London correspondent of the Fugger Bank at Augsburg wrote to his headquarters, " what belongs to the King of Spain, her

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 3.

brother, she thinks it right to withhold from the Duke of Alva." [1] On receiving this reply Don Guerau flew into a violent passion, and induced the Duke of Alva to lay an embargo on the property of all the English in the Netherlands. Elizabeth very properly retorted by seizing all Spanish property that was in England, including, of course, the whole (instead of part only) of that very desirable £100,000, which had led to all this imbroglio. Already diplomatic relations were at high tension, for the English ambassador at Madrid had been asked to withdraw from the Court,[2] and now Elizabeth put Don Guerau de Spes under arrest in his own house,[3] which, by a curious romance of destiny, was to become Drake's. Precisely then, Drake and Hawkins arrived and recounted to the Queen's Council the Spanish treachery and the attack made on their ships at San Juan.

That was just what the Queen wanted. She already had the pleasant windfall of £100,000 safe in the Tower, and now she refused to discuss that question at all, until Spain had explained this outrageous act of hostility to a power with which she was at peace, and to ships which had been given a guarantee of safety. She was building ships as hard as she could, and nothing could be more convenient than this excellent reason for protracted diplomatic correspondence while her shipbuilding went on, and all discussion of the little windfall was postponed. Her tortuous diplomacies are always hard to follow, but in general they were dictated by her desire to get money and to gain time. Meanwhile, as regards Drake himself, though there is no evidence that she saw him, he was a man likely to be useful, and he at once entered the Royal Navy. For one brief moment during that summer, he rose like a flying fish out of the sea which was becoming his native element, and took an

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 3. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 1.
[3] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 122.

excursion into domestic life. On 4th July 1569, he married a girl called Mary Newman, who is nothing more than a name, and vanishes again, leaving not a trace behind, nor any offspring. Drake's drum beat a couple of bars of the Wedding March, and then went back again to its more appropriate tune.

In the autumn of 1569 (nothing more having been heard of the £100,000) it was noticed that John Hawkins was very busy with journeys to Plymouth and recalls to London, and the rumour got about that he was to sail again before long with seven ships of the Queen's Navy. Some expedition, in any case, was clearly in preparation, and both the French and the Spanish ambassadors in London came to the conclusion that the perfidious "Jezebel of the North," as she was already impolitely termed, was engaged in some nefarious design against their respective countries. They reported their unease to their governments, but could not say what the design was. They were certainly getting in a highly nervous state about the activities of the rapidly growing Navy of "that Queen," but their Excellencies were allowed to remain in doubt as to whether the expedition was to support Huguenots at Rochelle, to whom the Queen had already sent out provisions and munitions,[1] or to attempt the rescue of the English prisoners and hostages whom Hawkins had been forced to leave at San Juan. The latter was probably the intention, but whatever it was, it was never carried out, for the Catholic insurrection broke out in the north, which was the signal for the Duke of Alva to invade England from the Netherlands. In consequence the Queen wanted all her ships at home. The Navy was mobilized, and there were no ships for Hawkins. The Catholic insurrection, however, was easily quelled, while the Duke of Alva showed the same engaging reluctance to support it as did his successor

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 7.

Parma, when urgently required to support the Spanish Armada.

But though Hawkins was forced to remain in England, as it was inadvisable, in the menace that brooded over so large a horizon, to weaken the home forces of the fleet, there is no doubt now that the rumour that he was sailing, and even had sailed, was strongly encouraged, for we find the Fugger Bank correspondent at Seville informing Augsburg, in December 1569, that Hawkins "had sailed for the West Indies with twenty-five well-found ships," and that "the most annoying part of the affair is that this Hawkins could not have fitted out so numerous and so well-equipped a fleet without the aid and secret consent of the Queen." [1] Its object was to waylay and capture Spanish treasure ships from the Indies. The effect of this belief was that Spanish ships were posted to watch for the strong English fleet which threatened their gold-bearing transports. They watched in vain because this English fleet never sailed at all, but it kept them on the alert, and occupied their attention. Possibly one of these sentry ships had seen two small vessels not worth the attention of the great galleons, scudding southwards. One of them carried the man who, in the years now dawning, became to the sea-captains of Spain the terror by night and the arrow by day.

While Spanish attention was thus fixed on the expected appearance of Hawkins with a strong fleet, Drake had slipped out of Plymouth with two insignificant little ships, the "Dragon" and the "Swan." They would certainly have merited no notice if Drake had not been on board, but by the ordinance of destiny, Drake was on board. This was only a quiet little reconnoitring voyage (its modest charges probably paid by the Hawkins firm) to see if a certain idea of Drake's, a gorgeous, a magnificently impertinent idea, was practicable, and he

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 7.

wanted to pry and prowl about in the West Indian coasts, without either attracting attention or doing anything that could possibly annoy the King of Spain. For he had already seen, on the troublesome voyage with Hawkins, those twelve great treasure ships lying at San Juan, and the sight of them had stuck in his mind. There they lay, the great fat golden geese, in indolent security, waiting for their escort, and Drake's imagination had been positively obsessed by them. We may indeed allow ourselves to believe that if he, and not his kinsman, had been in command of that ill-starred expedition, there would never have been any violation of good faith on the part of Don Martino Enriquez, nor any treacherous attack on the English, for by the time the thirteen great ships of escort arrived there would surely have been no English ship in the harbour at all, nor, indeed, much worth having on their own treasure ships. There had been lost, thought Drake, a great opportunity, and if he had had the handling of it Elizabeth would have received very satisfactory dividends on her stake in the adventure. But there were as many opportunities in the future as there had been in the past, and the immediate object of this modest little scouting voyage was to find convenient and vulnerable spots in the long route of conveyance which lay between the gold mines of Peru at one end, and King Philip's pockets at the other.

Drake returned from his inquisitive expedition some time during 1570, but he made no known report whatever of what he had ascertained. As far as it went, it was probably satisfactory, for early next year he set forth again in even a more inconspicuous manner than before, the "Swan," a ship of twenty-five tons, comprising his entire Armada. But a deadlier little bird never paddled round the coasts of the Spanish Main : it had the eyes of a hawk, the claws of an eagle, and in its master's hands, as in those of a conjurer, it had the most remarkable gift

of suddenly disappearing. Very quietly it swam about, and discovered on the coast of Darien the withdrawn and sheltered nook of which precisely it was in search, against the time when it should return to nest there with a consort. This nook was a small natural harbour, hidden excellently well in jungle and forest that came down to the water's edge, and it had a narrow entrance between two high wooded capes, which protected it from every wind. There the "Swan" made its nest in this little hollow hole of a harbour in the waters of which was an abundance of fish. There were good water-springs on shore, and fruit was plentiful and also game, and in particular there were many pheasants in the forest, which made good fare, and Drake called the place "Port Pheasant." He also buried stores there which would be useful to the "Swan" in its nesting season, and cut paths for it in the jungle in case it wanted to amble inland. All this was admirable, and what was more admirable yet was that the nest of our shy little bird was close to the trade route of the Spanish treasure ships, the great golden geese that wallowed heavily home to Cadiz. To Nombre de Dios, along the coast westwards, came the mule trains from Panama, laden with gold from the unfathomable mines of Peru, and at Nombre de Dios the heavy panniers were emptied, and the ships were ballasted with gold for King Philip II, that most Christian monarch, with a beard. With those gleaming cargoes King Philip built more ships against the growing fleet of the heretic Jezebel, his sister, and paid his armies in the Netherlands which, when all was ready, would overrun her realm, and make of it a province of Spain.

Drake wanted quietly to study the meteor track of the treasure, and so the "Swan" scouted about and learned many useful things. Sometimes the gold from Panama came straight overland to Nombre de Dios, or, if there

was plenty of water in the River Chagres, it was embarked inland at Venta Cruz, and thence taken on rafts and boats to the harbour at Nombre de Dios,[1] from which it set forth to Spain. And all the time that the "Swan" was making her quiet observations, Drake was also studying Spanish ships and Spanish seamanship, and his growing familiarity with them bred contempt of their clumsiness. But the "Swan" kept well out of the way for the present, for quiet observation, not argument, was her mission, and if any Spanish ship in its proud course was likely to come near her, she would scuttle back into her nest, the opening of which was only half a cable's length across, and vanish. Later she would have business with those slow-manœuvring hulks, but just now she wanted none of them to take the slightest interest in her. Where exactly her nest was it is impossible to say, so small and inconspicuous was it, but it can hardly have been, as Sir Julian Corbett suggests,[2] at Puerto Escondido, close to Caledonia Bay, for Puerto Escondido was a harbour known to the Spaniards, and thus the last place Drake would have chosen, since there would have always been the risk of a Spanish ship popping in on the "Swan." It must have been some small natural inlet on that long wooded coast, unfrequented by the enemy. There, before leaving the Spanish Main, he made a cache of things likely to be useful to him on his return, and now it was time to be off homewards again, and prepare for the campaign which was already outlined. The work of these two years was but the preliminary manœuvres, executed out of sight of the enemy. Before finally leaving the coast, Drake took several prizes, which must have been valuable, for the cruise

[1] Mr. Froude, *English Seamen*, p. 84, says that Nombre de Dios is at the mouth of the River Chagres. The actual distance is about seventy miles.

[2] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 154.

proved profitable : he also took some Spanish prisoners, whom, before sailing for England, he set free. The Spanish custom was to kill all prisoners, but it was not Drake's. During his whole career he killed only two prisoners, and that under extreme provocation.[1]

Drake went home, but not for many months, and I suspect that poor Mary (*née* Newman) saw very little of him. He instantly set about making preparations for the immortal voyage to the Spanish Main, which perhaps was the most superbly Drakian of all his exploits, and which began that strange transformation of him, while still living, into a legendary figure. Spain, symbolized in the person of King Philip, was a colossus invincibly bestriding the Atlantic and overshadowing the world, and now Captain Francis Drake, who had never commanded any ship of more than fifty tons, having taken a good look at the majestic giant, proceeded to swarm up the colossal limbs, and in his own rude language, to singe his beard. In fact, from that time forth he scarcely ever climbed down again, nor desisted from that most congenial occupation.

We are lucky to have an account of this voyage to the Spanish Main given in great detail, and edited by Drake's nephew, Sir Francis Drake, Baronet, the son of his youngest brother Thomas, and the only descendant of that big family of twelve brothers. It was published in 1626, under the stimulating title,

"SIR FRANCIS DRAKE
REVIVED.

"Calling upon this dull and effeminate age to follow his noble steps for gold and silver."

It was compiled by Philip Nichols, preacher, from

[1] See p. 195.

the reports of Christopher Ceely, Ellis Hixom, and other sailors who took part in the voyage. Drake himself revised it, adding many notes, and clearly meant to publish it himself, for he also wrote the dedication to Queen Elizabeth, in which he declared the book to be the official and authentic account of his voyage, and to be designed to refute the false versions and misrepresentations that were current. Indeed, he calls it the "first fruits of your servant's pen," and thus personally vouches for it. Mr. Froude seems to have been unaware of this, for his only account of the book is that the "Drake family published it in the middle of the next century,"[1] which is not only false but also misleading. A short preface of preliminary matter definitely states that he undertook this voyage to right the wrongs he had undergone at the hands of the Spanish at Rio de la Hacha and San Juan d'Ulua. He had applied to the Queen for recompense, but could not obtain it, and so took the matter into his own hands: in fact, he went to war with King Philip, and never, till the day of his death, made peace. The Queen was not a shareholder in this venture (a fact which she must subsequently have much regretted), and Drake got together the money for it privately.

The ensuing account of the voyage is almost entirely compiled from this source. No book of sky-larking schoolboy adventure comes anywhere near, in the matter of romance, of escapes and escapades, of buccaneering failures and achievements, to this authentic history. Drake framed the amazing expedition on his own lines, and carried it out according to his own unhampered ideas, and from first to last it is a *locus classicus* for the appreciation of his genius. All was elastic, dependent on circumstances, but the main object was nothing less than to take Nombre de Dios itself, empty the gold and silver of its treasure houses, as they awaited transport

[1] Froude, *English Seamen*, pp. 84, 85.

to the ports of Spain, into the holds of his own ships, and alter their destination to the port of Plymouth. Further items in the programme were the capture of treasure trains crossing the Isthmus from Panama, and the destruction of Spanish shipping.

Drake thought that two smart little ships would be sufficient for the opening of his private war with Spain, and one of these, of course, was the "Swan," eager to get back to her nest, the other a comparative giant, the "Pasha," of no less than seventy tons, or nearly three times the tonnage of the "Swan." He was Admiral, commanding the "Pasha," his younger brother John was Captain of the "Swan," and a second brother Joseph was of the crew. There was not a man on board or a boy who had not volunteered for the voyage, and in all his crews numbered seventy-three youngsters; with the exception of one veteran who was over fifty, not one of that exuberant company had attained the age of thirty, for it was ever the young with whom Drake loved to work and to take the monstrous risks that were dear to youth. The two ships were provisioned for a year, and were "heedfully provided with all Munitions and Artillery," and, as well, they had on board the parts of "three dainty pinnaces" to be set up when required. They set out from Plymouth on Whitsun Eve, May 24th, 1572, and went straight for the "Swan's" nest at Port Pheasant. And instantly we step into the exhilarating air of high, breathless, and superb romance, and in that suspension we remain till Drake gets home again.

The enchanting history opens on a most felicitous level. The ships arrived at the secret harbour on July 12th, but the alleys that Drake had cut in the jungle were so overgrown with tropical vegetation that at first he doubted whether this was indeed the "Swan's" nest. But there was no mistake, for just here he had made his cache of stores and arms, and now he saw that it had been

discovered, dug up, and rifled : the nest had been wholly despoiled. But a friend had been here since, for there was a leaden plate affixed to a conspicuous tree thus inscribed :

"Captain Drake. If you fortune to come into this port make haste away : for the Spaniards which you had with you here last year have bewrayed this place, and taken away all that you left here. I departed from hence this present 7th July, 1572.

"Your very loving friend,

"JOHN GARRET."

Now John Garret, a native of Plymouth, had been here with Drake the year before, and had joined some English trading company instead of returning to England with him. Certainly he was a level-headed fellow, for knowing that Drake meant to come back here, and knowing also, having just visited the "Swan's" nest, that the secret was secret no longer, he had seen the danger of the Spaniards laying an ambush for him here. How to give him warning must have set John Garret to belabour his wits, and the notion of affixing that imperishable lead tablet to a conspicuous tree could hardly have been bettered. For all that, it would seem that John Garret had not read the riddle wholly right, for though somebody had found and rifled Drake's cache, that was far more probably the work of some chance wayfarer, for we cannot believe that Drake had landed his prisoners at the very spot which, above all others, he wished to keep secret.

The matter was clearly serious. Only five days ago Garret had been here, and Drake must make up his mind whether to abandon the place and find another secret harbour, or erect some sort of tenable fort here against a similar chance. But he seems to have concluded that the rifling of the cache was the work of men who had no reason to connect it with him, and that since

they had taken away all that was of value, there was no reason to suppose that they would come back. Otherwise he must have abandoned so dangerous a base, if it was known to the Spaniards as being his. Instead he settled to retain it, and at once all his seventy-three boys were busy felling great trees, and building with them a pentagonal enclosure, thirty feet high. It had no gate landwards, but one on the water which every night was shut up and made secure with a great tree drawn athwart it. The enclosure was three-quarters of an acre in extent, and the pinnaces, now set up from the sections he had brought out, were, when not in use, beached inside it. These pinnaces were light boats, half-decked, which sailed if there was a wind, and were rowed if it failed.

They were all hard at work, when there came an interruption. The very next morning there appeared directly outside the "Swan's" nest an English ship belonging to Sir Edward Horsey, which, under the captaincy of James Ranse,[1] had just captured a Spanish despatch boat and a shallop. Sir Edward Horsey had been quite a pretty pirate in his time, and it was only natural that the captains should have a talk, and that Drake should disclose his designs on Nombre de Dios. Captain Ranse wished to join, and a contract of partnership was made, the command of the raid (it is needless to add) being in the sole hands of Drake.

Now this can hardly have been welcome to him: we can see him fuming at this modification of what he had planned so carefully at Plymouth. All his own men were boys, like himself, and they were all volunteers, and he could have got twice the number to come to singe the King of Spain's beard had he wanted more. And here was this Ranse butting in: it would have been dis-

[1] This cannot have been the same as James Ranse, Master of the "William and Mary," for that ship, with all apparently on board, was lost in Hawkins's expedition while approaching San Juan d'Ulua.

courteous to have withheld the scheme from another English captain, and even if he had, Ranse might have gone messing about up towards Nombre de Dios, and put the Spaniards on the alert. Anyhow, Ranse—an old fellow, probably nearly forty—could be left in charge of the ships, for the taking of Nombre de Dios, as Drake had planned it, was no diversion for ancient and prudent persons.

The ships then were to remain in discreet retirement, while the "dainty pinnaces" which had been brought out in sections from England and were now set up, attempted this impertinent and hazardous feat. But this shallop of Ranse's was handy enough : it, like the pinnaces, was a light boat and could be rowed if the wind failed, and twenty of Ranse's sailors should man it. As for the three dainty pinnaces—the more Drake saw of them, the more he liked them—they were to be manned with fifty-three of his Devon boys, each of whom he knew well, for he had chosen them himself, and during the voyage out he licked them into shape, and had cursed and blessed them, and blooded them and physicked them when necessary.[1] Some were handy with the pike, and those should carry pikes, and some were handy with their bows and arrows, and those should be his archers. On the arrows were to be lumps of burning tow, for a flight of flaming arrows in a night attack would surely be unsettling to Spanish nerves, and it would be quite as unsettling to be hit by them. Others would carry muskets and cullivers, and two would be armed merely with loud braying trumpets, and two with drums—most important. . . . All this Drake had already planned, and indeed it was an original equipment for a handful of boys who were out to take the golden city of Nombre de Dios. As for the disposal of his boys to man the three pinnaces, that was simple : they should arrange that

[1] Stow, *Annals*, p. 808.

themselves, so that every boy should have his particular friend next him, and so it was done. All was ready now, and they came softly out of the "Swan's" nest, three pinnaces and a shallop, seventy-three young men in all.

Here, then, was Drake in his element at last, with a mad adventure, most sanely thought out, in front of him. Perhaps he had already been at Nombre de Dios, for there is a Spanish tradition that he had gone there the year before, disguised as a Spaniard, to have a look round. Nothing could have been more like Drake than to do that, and, if it is true, it would account for the uncanny knowledge he seemed to possess of the town when he got there. On the other hand, nothing could be more like Drake than to know by a sort of instinct where everything was. But most of all was it like Drake to set forth in high confidence to capture the fortified and garrisoned city of Nombre de Dios, with a shallop manned by twenty men, which was altogether extra to the force he had deemed necessary, and three pinnaces manned by his Devon boys, who were strangely armed with pikes and burning arrows and drums and trumpets. Surely he had in his mind the dare-devil story of Gideon, which came in the only book to which Drake ever paid much attention. This must have been a Gideon-notion, and the Lord prospered Gideon.

Their course was westwards along the coast: they sailed when the wind favoured them, and when it failed they rowed to the rhythm of the songs of Devon. On their way they put in at the Isle of Pines,[1] where they found two frigates from Nombre de Dios loading up with timber. Natives, not Spaniards, were employed in this job, and Drake made out that these black fellows

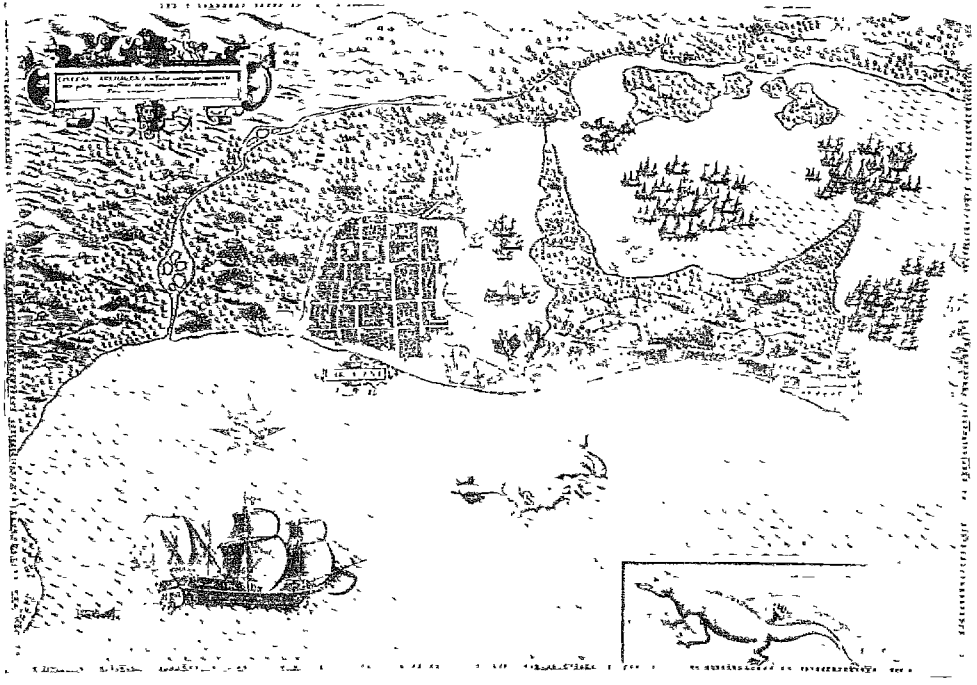
[1] This Isle of Pines can hardly have been the island so marked on the Admiralty charts, for this must have lain east of the "Swan's" nest, and Drake was going westward. Probably he christened it as it was covered with pines, just as he christened Port Pheasant.

belonged to a tribe called the Cimaroons, who lived in the forests around the Isthmus of Panama. They were a strong fierce lot, who detested the Spaniards, and not long ago had themselves made a raid on Nombre de Dios, which was just the business now. Drake habitually saw opportunities where others would have seen nothing at all, and learning that some of them wanted to be put back on the Main, he took them off the island in his pinnaces and landed them there. Let them rejoin their tribe, said Drake to himself, and tell their relations what nice fellows the English were, and how they had put them ashore, and how they abhorred those devilish Spanish masters of theirs. That was a touch of true Drakian resourcefulness : very likely it would be useful before long to be friendly with the fierce tribe through whose territory passed the treasure-laden mules from Panama. Off went the grinning Cimaroons, and as they had been kidnapped to an island from which they desired to escape, the English language was enriched by the word "Maroon."

The three ships, Ranse's and the "Pasha" and the "Swan," had accompanied them as far as this Isle of Pines, and here they were left behind in hiding, while up the coast towards Nombre de Dios crept the dainty pinnaces and the shallop, till, at nightfall, on about the last of July, they found themselves still undetected, behind the eastern promontory of the bay where the town lay. The friendly Cimaroons had given a very formidable account of the place, and though Drake had been full of encouragement, telling his boys that with such a crew, "like-minded with himself," they could not fail of success, he observed that, as the night went on, they were getting rather nervous and jumpy, and that would never do. His plan had been to attack at dawn, as soon as there was sufficient light to see by, but he disliked this nervous strain which was telling on them.

So when, at three in the morning, the east began to brighten with the coming moonrise, he put an end to this tense waiting, and declared it was the dawn. Round the point into the harbour swept the pinnaces, and there, by a stroke of cruel ill-luck was a Spanish ship (laden, as they subsequently ascertained, with good Canary wine and other delicacies) which had just cast anchor, and whose boat was even then rowing to the shore. Without the slightest hesitation, but with mighty oaths, Drake whacked up the pinnaces to top-speed, intercepted the Spanish boat, so that it had to put across to the far side of the harbour, and shot his men out on the platform of the fort at the water's edge. There was but one gunner in charge at this hour of peaceful moonrise, for not an enemy's ship was known to be within leagues of the bay, and he fled helter-skelter into the town to give the alarm. Drake paused only to tumble the battery of guns off their carriages, and his Devon boys were in full cry after the gunner. But already the big alarm bell in the church was ringing and the town aroused. Drake sent on a couple of men to stop that clanging, but the tower where the bell hung was strong, and they could not force an entrance. His injunction to them not to fire on the church, which has been piously ascribed to his unwillingness to damage a sacred building, was, of course, simply due to the fact that he wanted all ammunition for other purposes, and it was no use wasting the fire of two muskets on a stout tower. Though Fuller tells us (no doubt founding his statement on this incident) that Drake always spared churches "if he could," we must reluctantly conclude that he hardly ever could. He had no more veneration for a Roman Catholic church than he had for a pigsty, and not once or twice, but constantly and consistently,[1] we find him smashing up images

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 304: Southey, *British Admirals*, p. 175, etc.



CARTAGENA, "THE CAPITAL OF THE SPANISH MAIN"

and annexing vestments, missals and chalices with the utmost gusto.

Drake's plan had been rehearsed, and now, leaving sixteen men to guard the pinnaces, he sent half his minute force under his brother and John Oxenham to scuttle round outside the town, and enter the market-place, where was the Governor's house, from the east, while he, with the rest, advanced with pikes and flaming arrows and one trumpet and one drum, making the hell of a noise up the main street. A small body of Spaniards had by now formed up in the market-place, and a volley of musket-shot greeted Drake's detachment, which killed his trumpeter, and severely wounded him in the leg. But he was the only person who knew about that, and he did not tell anybody. By now they had debouched into the market-place, and the deadly little fire-bearing arrows were flickering, while the drum continued to make an awful din, and just as they got to a hand-to-hand scrap with pikes, John Drake, with the other detachment, came up the street from the east taking the Spaniards on the flank, with another flight of fiery arrows and another nerve-racking drum and blaring trumpet. Not knowing what might be coming next or from where, the bewildered Spaniards fled in confusion and panic, leaving the Governor's house unguarded. A couple of prisoners, whom they had taken, conducted the English to it, and there, for the first time, they set eyes on the gleam of the fabulous wealth from the New World. They threw open the cellar store-house, and the light of their torches was reflected from a great pile of metal that faced them, a wall of silver bars, twelve feet in height and seventy in length and ten in thickness. Not less than a million sterling lay there winking at them.

But Drake had no use for silver, cheap common silver, for he guessed there was a lordlier booty yet of gold and of pearls in the King's Treasury near the harbour, and

sending his brother and John Oxenham ahead to break it open, he left some of the Devon boys to hold the market-place in case the Spanish re-formed again. There was half an hour's delay owing to a prodigious thunderstorm that broke out, and then he called on the rest to follow him, telling them that he had now brought them to the mouth of the treasury of the world, which if they did not gain, none but themselves was to be blamed. Even as he spoke, he fainted and fell, and his boys saw that his footsteps were footsteps of blood, which came from the wound he had received at the first onslaught, of which he had said nothing. They bound it up for him with his scarf, and gave him a nip of spirits, and tried to persuade him to go back to the pinnaces. Then, as he would not listen to them, they broke out into flagrant and loving mutiny, and they picked him up and carried him down to the boats, and thought no more about the King's Treasury, for he was worthier to them than the treasures of the world.

Now this gleeful, though quite unproductive exploit of the taking of Nombre de Dios, is one which Mr. Froude rejects as incredible, because Drake's numbers were so small, and because if there had been anything like a battle, an alarm would have been raised in the neighbourhood, and it is evident that no alarm was given. But with regard to the first objection, we must note that the number of Spanish troops was very small too : it is clear that only a handful of men gathered in the market-place. As yet Spanish towns on the Main had no experience of serious raids, and they were only garrisoned sufficiently to protect shipping and defend themselves against attacks by Cimaroons, who had no guns. With regard to his second objection, Nombre de Dios was an isolated post, and there were no Spanish settlements in the immediate neighbourhood ; also the whole raid only lasted a few hours, and was over, and

Drake was gone, by morning. But most conclusive as to the general truth of the account given in *Sir Francis Drake Revived*, is the discourse of a Portuguese, Lopez Vaz,[1] which the Earl of Cumberland took in his expedition to the River Plate in 1586. Lopez Vaz exaggerates the number of the English, and declares that there were no Spanish troops at all, and only unarmed inhabitants. But Drake's advance into the market-place, "sounding a trumpet very loud," the death of his trumpeter, Drake being wounded in the leg, the advance of the second English column, also with a trumpet, the retreat to the pinnaces and the departure of the raiders without getting any booty, tally precisely with the English version, and constitute a perfectly satisfactory proof of the narrative's general correctness in this particular instance, and furnish a valuable test as to the truth of the rest.

So off went the mutinous pinnace with Drake safely on board. They stopped to relieve the ship which was just casting anchor in the harbour at moonrise that morning, of its excellent Canary wine, and then paddled over about dawn to a small island which lay beyond gunshot from the town, where they found plenty of fruit and poultry. There they remained very comfortably for a couple of days nursing their wounded and drinking Canary wine, and Drake held no court-martial for the rank mutiny of his young devils. While they took their ease there, a polite officer came from Nombre de Dios, under the flag of truce, desiring to learn what was the actual strength of those two noisy columns that had poured into the market-place. But what he said that he desired to learn (and indeed that was very interesting too) was whether this was Captain Drake, who had been prowling about the coast for the last two years, and whether those disconcerting arrows which had wounded many of the Spanish were poisoned. Drake willingly acknowledged

[1] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. x. p. 75.

his identity, for he was as vain as a peacock, and that pleased him, and said that he never used poisoned arrows. Then he appears to have lost his temper, for he added that he wanted, for himself and his company, some of that "special commodity," gold and silver, which this country yielded. He advised the Governor therefore "to hold open his eye," for by the help of God he meant to reap some of that harvest which was sent into Spain to trouble the earth.

So that was that, and after a few more compliments, it seemed to Drake that conversation with a spy, though pleasing, was not profitable, so he said that dinner was ready. He fed his hidalgo with "great favour and courteous entertainment, besides such gifts as most contented him," and after dinner "he was in such sort dismissed to make report of what he had seen, that he protested he was never so much honoured of any in his life." From which we gather that he liked the Canary wine.

Drake must have enjoyed that dinner too. He loved pompous and courtly behaviour, and high airs and hospitable swagger. But no doubt this honoured guest had estimated how modest was the number of those who had taken Nombre de Dios, and it was best to get back from this idyllic picnic on the Victualling Island, and rejoin the concealed ships he had left in charge of Captain Ranse at the Isle of Pines. There the two commanders had a conference, and Captain Ranse, learning what had happened at Nombre de Dios, sagaciously opined that the Spanish would now be on the look-out, and that any further raids would possibly be attended with risks. Drake cordially agreed with this powerful reasoning, proposed the dissolution of the partnership which had lasted about a fortnight, and off went Captain Ranse with his ship and his shallop in search of less perilous adventures.

So Drake, to his great content, was alone again with his Devon boys, and made some plans after his own

heart. Yet we can scarcely say that he made plans: his only plan really was to do something very surprising, and then wait to see how the Spaniards would reply. And then, whatever they replied, he did something more surprising. The general idea of his campaign, which was the capture of treasure from Peru, was determined, but his tactics were a series of incalculable adventures, designed to bewilder: the King of Spain never knew what piece of his beard was to be singed next. There was just a little more information Drake wanted about the River Chagres, for the treasure was sometimes embarked on its upper reaches at Venta Cruz, and thence conveyed by water to Nombre de Dios. He therefore sent off his brother, John Drake, and one of the crew, Ellis Hixom, in charge of a pinnace, to make exploration, and nursed his wounded leg till their return.

Now Drake's notion was to capture the treasure from Peru, not on the sea, but on land, as it came from Panama; and, as we have already seen, he had treated certain Cimaroons with kindness, putting them ashore on the Main, in the hope that they would tell their tribe that there were some nice young men knocking about who were as deadly foes to the Spaniards as they themselves. Thus, when Drake came to conduct operations on land, he would find allies in the wild tribesmen. Already his wisdom was justifying itself, for one of them, Diego, had joined him at Nombre de Dios, and had supplied useful information. But he must give time for that leaven to work, and in the interval, since he was meditating operations by land, it was characteristically Drakian to fix the attention of the Spanish on the sea. So when his brother John returned from his reconnaissance, off the whole squadron went, ships and pinnaces and all, to busy themselves on the most unlikely project, which was an attack on Cartagena itself, the capital of the Spanish Main. It never entered Drake's head, of

course, to attempt to take it, for he could not possibly have held the port where the great armed Spanish escorts, like those he had met with at San Juan, were constantly arriving. The attack was, for immediate purposes, nothing but a feint to keep Spanish eyes glued to the sea, but a knowledge of the harbour of Cartagena proved in later years to be of use. Drake put it into that unleaking memory of his.

Apart from its purpose as a feint, this little water party to Cartagena was just a lark, an impertinent schoolboy lark, a gesture of contempt for all things Spanish. Drake entered the harbour with his three pinnaces at nightfall, and there, at the entrance, was a Spanish frigate, on which there was a solitary and loquacious old man, the rest of the crew having gone ashore "to fight about a mistress." This ancient mariner told them that there was a big ship from Seville in the bay adjoining, which had discharged its cargo and was sailing next morning for San Domingo. That was irresistible: so off the three pinnaces went (taking the old man along with them, just in case he was fooling them), and sure enough he had spoken the truth. So, with two pinnaces coming alongside on her starboard, and the other amidships on her port, the boys climbed very quietly up her high sides, battened down her hatches, to keep her slumbering crew safe below, and towed her away. When it was day, Drake, keeping out of range of the guns on shore, solemnly took her right across the mouth of the harbour, in full view of the town, and there was a nice surprise for Cartagena! Cartagena rang its alarm bells and blazed away with its cannon, but all to no purpose, and the boys came on to the ship from their pinnaces, and they sailed off. The same day they took two frigates,[1] which

[1] The frigate, as Sir Julian Corbett points out (*Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 162), was not then the powerful ship it became, but a small one-masted vessel with eight to twelve oars on each side.

were bringing despatches to Cartagena from Nombre de Dios, with news of Drake's raid on the town : these must have been amusing reading, for they warned the Governor that Captain Drake was still on the coast, and careful watch should be kept. After that he set the crew of their prize ashore on an island, and with the pinnaces in tow sailed it away to the secret anchorage at the Isle of Pines. Quite an amusing little excursion, very refreshing and cheeky.

Then there arose a problem which Drake had to deal with, and which he dealt with in quite his own manner. He adored his dainty pinnaces : they were exactly suited (as he had known they would be) for these swift raids and unexpected appearances. They sailed nimbly and were easily handled, and they were also independent of wind, for the crew got a good speed out of them, by rowing, in calms or contrary airs. But his crews, which originally had numbered only seventy-three, all told, were insufficient to man the two ships and the pinnaces as well. To leave one of his ships here without a crew would only mean that sooner or later the Spaniards would capture her, and it would be far better to scuttle or burn her. The ship for sacrifice must be the " Swan," for she could not alone carry all his crew, and he must keep the " Pasha." The " Pasha " would thus become his store ship and naval base, and the pinnaces be fleet and fully manned. But the difficulty that faced him was that Brother John was captain of the " Swan," and he and his crew were devoted to their handy little ship : they would not take kindly to the idea of her destruction. Drake cudgelled his brain over this : it would be a most unpopular order, if he decreed that the " Swan " must die, and yet he must have more men for his pinnaces.[1] And then he thought of a

[1] The Narrative is perfectly explicit about the reason why Drake scuttled the " Swan," and Mr. H. R. Wagner's statement (*Sir Francis*

beautiful plan, which must be told in the words of the Narrative :

"To accomplish this, therefore, he sent for one Thomas Moone (who was carpenter of the 'Swan'), and taking him into his cabin, charged him to conceal for a time a piece of service which he must in any case consent to do aboard his own ship—that was in the middle of the second watch, to go down secretly into the well of the ship, and with a great spike-gimlet to bore three holes as near to the keel as he could, and lay something against it, that the force of the water entering might make no great noise nor be discovered by a boiling up.

"Thomas Moone, at the hearing thereof, being utterly dismayed, desired to know 'What cause there might be to move him to sink so goodly a bark of his own, new and strong, and that, by *his* means, who had been in two so rich and gainful voyages in her with himself heretofore. If his brother the Master and the rest of the company should know of such his fact, he thought verily they would kill him.'

"But when our Captain had imparted to him his cause, and had persuaded him with promise that it should not be known till all of them should be glad of it, he understood it and did it accordingly."

Early next morning, a fine morning of mid-August, out came Drake in his pinnace, all blandness and innocence, to go fishing. He paddled across to the "Swan," and, with his eyebrows very much raised and his humorous mouth a-twitch, saw that Thomas Moone had done his job. He hailed Brother John, who was not up yet, to come fishing with him : no hurry, he would wait for him. As they rowed away, said Drake suddenly, "Why, how low your ship is in the water!" Low indeed it was, for water had been coming into it since the middle of the second watch (that carefully calculated hour), and Brother John called to the steward to see if there was any

Drake's Voyage around the World, p. 12) that he wanted to prevent his men returning to England has no foundation.

water in the hold, and the steward, stepping briskly down into the hold, found himself waist-deep. He sang out that the ship was full of water, and so Brother John put back to see about it, and Brother Francis offered to come too. But John said that he need not do that : let him go fishing, for there were plenty of men to man the pumps, though it was all very mysterious. So Francis went fishing, and all hands on the " Swan " were set to pump, and they got some fellows from the " Pasha " to help. But such fine big holes had Thomas Moone bored with his spike-gimlet, that though they sweated and pumped all day till three of the afternoon, they could gain but little on the water, and were quite unable to find the leak, for it was close to the keel where the water was deepest, and there was a board wedged down over it. It seemed hopeless, and Francis shook his head sadly at the mishap. The best he could advise was that the crew should take their belongings out of the drowning " Swan " and set her a-fire, so that she should not fall into the enemy's hands. It was dreadful for Brother John, who loved his ship, said Drake, but he should be captain of the " Pasha," and he himself would sail in a pinnace till they took some fresh prize. It was so done, and the crew of the " Swan " came aboard the " Pasha," Thomas Moone among them, with his useful spike-gimlet. And thus Drake got enough men for the dainty pinnaces without hurting anybody's feelings, and he mourned over the loss of the " Swan," and could not understand it at all. She must have had a bad leak. . . .

CHAPTER V

THE CAPTURE OF THE TREASURE TRAINS



O that was done, and Drake could get to work. The great immediate object now was to establish and cement friendly relations with the Cimaroons, who, he hoped, would be both guides and allies in his design (so simple when somebody had thought of it) of intercepting the treasure-laden convoys on their way across the Isthmus from Panama. Unlike the great Lord Kitchener, he was a leader of the most elastic notions, and never laid out a campaign in which each step followed by flawless mechanism on the last, as hour follows hour, when the clock is wound. Drake took a step, and then, so to speak, standing on one leg, waited till he saw where he could most surprisingly plant the next. Swift and brilliant improvisation, rather than a reasoned progress, was his method. So now, with pinnaces fully manned, in case of any unexpected plums by the way, he went quietly up the Gulf of Darien, concealed the "Pasha" in a well-secluded inlet, and, under the tutelage of Diego, who, since the affair at Nombre de Dios, had attached himself to Drake with dog-like devotion, built quarters ashore for his crews on the model of a Cimaroon village. It was hard work in the damp sweltering heat, so while that was getting done he gave his boys a fortnight's holiday. He cleared a bit of jungle, and

made this a playground where they could amuse themselves with quoits and bowls ; half the crews only worked each day, while the others diverted themselves. The workers had also to get provisions, but that was not difficult, since fish and fowl and flesh were abundant, and a smith's forge was set up for repair of broken iron fittings. Drake, it is needless to state, had foreseen that this would be wanted, and he had brought out a few sackfuls of coal from England for his smithy.

Having established the base, Drake set off with two pinnaces, on a series of small raids. They cruised about, eastwards and westwards; they chased victualling frigates, and relieved them of hams and hogs and maize; they landed at the island of Tolou for vegetables, for it was important to lay in plentiful stores, as he had learned from the Cimaroons that now, at the approach of the rainy season, when mountain streams became swollen and mule tracks impassable, the treasure convoys ceased to cross the Isthmus, and laid up till the rains were over. So by way of filling up time, Drake did his marketing by sea, thus keeping the Spaniards alert in that quarter, since he projected raids by land. Copious traps they set for him, but he never fell into them ; once they sent an apparently empty frigate out to sea, hoping that he would try to board it, but when he came close he saw rows of heads just above the bulwarks, so that was no use. On another occasion, chiefly it would seem out of sheer reckless high spirits, Drake sprang ashore from the pinnace in a wooded place where he knew Spaniards to be ambushed. He wanted to create also an atmosphere of contempt for them among his boys, and with a view to that visited Cartagena again, and had a long game of hide-and-seek in the harbour.

Endless were these small adventures : they had no definite object except to keep his men busy, to obtain provisions, to keep the Spanish looking seawards, and,

above all, to give time for the establishment of friendly relations with the Cimaroons. But the weather continued to be disgusting, and the crews of the two roving pinnaces began to suffer from their continued exposure to heat and cold. So, though Drake himself never ailed, he took the boys back, about the end of November, to their comfortable quarters ashore to be fed and dried after these weeks of almost amphibious life, until the treasure trains were on the move again. Sickness had appeared among them, and he was their nurse as well as their General.

Heavy news greeted his arrival. The pinnace which he had left with the ship had been peacefully employed one day in bringing planks for the building of the settlement ashore, and it was returning laden when the crew spied a frigate at sea which might be taken. They urged their captain, John Drake, to give chase, but this at first he refused to do, for there were no arms on the pinnace except a rapier, of which the point was broken, and a couple of old guns. But they continued to urge and taunt him, till against his better judgment he yielded, "For it shall never be said," he told them, "that I will be the hindmost, neither shall you report to my brother that you lost your voyage by any cowardice you found in me." So they pitched the planks overboard, and in the bow of the pinnace stood John Drake, with the rapier and his pillow for a gauntlet, and by him was young Richard Allen with one of the popguns. They boarded the frigate, but found her full of men armed with pikes and firearms, and the two who led them fell mortally wounded. But they saw to it that the pinnace got clear, and then they lay down and died.

Such was the news that awaited Drake when he came back with the other two pinnaces, and in the first week of the New Year (1573) came a yet heavier trouble. A deadly sickness broke out in the camp: within two or

three days of its appearance six men died of it, and soon thirty, or nearly half the entire company, were stricken. Probably it was yellow fever, for malaria could not have claimed its victims so speedily. The skill of the ship's doctor was of no avail, but it was possible, thought Drake, that a post-mortem might show what organs were affected, and so point to a remedy. But none must be able to say that he spared himself, and when, one night, his young brother Joseph died in his arms, he ordered the doctor to take him as the subject for dissection. But nothing was found that could suggest a cure, and then in turn the doctor, who had already suffered and recovered from the disease, made his own sacrifice for the sake of the rest. He concocted a dose of dangerous potency which he thought might prove efficacious, but he tried it first, not on any of his patients, but on himself, and died of it. The two incidents make us realize what sort of spirit animated the leaders of the fever-stricken camp.

These were calamities which might well have snapped even a finely-tempered courage: twenty-eight of the crew had now perished of the plague, there had been four casualties otherwise, and both Drake's brothers were dead. But his flame never flickered for a moment, nor did the idea of giving up the quest so much as enter his head. He was here, though now with only half his company (and of those many sick), to take the treasure of the King of Spain, with which he troubled the world, and that was still his business. The leaven had by now worked among the Cimaroons, and thirty of the tribesmen had joined him to be his guides and allies against the detestable common enemy, with news that, the rains being now over, the convoys of treasure-bearing mules would be on the move again. The Cimaroons had already been out scouting for Drake, and learned that the Spanish fleet which came at this season to transport

the treasure to Spain had arrived at Nombre de Dios, and Drake despatched one of the pinnaces to confirm that. It was time therefore to start, but there were many still sick, and he had to leave hale men to look after them and guard the ship. Forty-eight, all told, therefore, were the sum of his party, eighteen English and thirty Cimaroons. The ship and the pinnaces and the sick he left under charge of Ellis Hixom, and told him not to trust any messenger who, in his absence, purported to come from him, unless such messenger brought something in his handwriting. For disaster might overtake him, and an order, apparently coming from him, to move the ship or to join him, might only prove to be a Spanish or Cimaroon trap to capture the rest. But a scrap of his handwriting would be a safe token, for neither Spaniard nor Cimaroon could easily counterfeit that.

Never surely in all history was there so gorgeously impertinent a guerilla, but Drake was at war with the King of Spain, and was going to singe his beard. In his rear, on the Atlantic, were the cities and ships and soldiers of that pestered monarch, the long coast and settlements of the Main, and the islands of the gulf ; in front, at the end of the track over the Isthmus, were the town and garrison and ships of Panama, and between the two a party of eighteen English with native guides, wholly contemptuous of the ships and the troops and the fevers that surrounded them. A couple of Cimaroons scouted ahead, and at any moment, on the hint of alarm, Drake's army could vanish like smoke into the forest that bordered the track. The treasure-laden mules were the objective, and until they came in touch with them, even a solitary wayfarer encountered on the road might give word that he had met a strange little party of English marching towards Panama, and the Spanish, who were still looking seawards for Drake's marauding pinnaces, would turn their eyes elsewhere. We must conclude,

therefore, when the Narrative says that in two days' march they "reached" Venta Cruz (which was the half-way house between Nombre de Dios and Panama, where, if the river Chagres was navigable, the treasure was sometimes put on boats), that they did not enter the place or show themselves at all, but only arrived in its neighbourhood.

So they followed the track till they came near Venta Cruz, on the chance of intercepting a convoy coming from there by land to Nombre de Dios, and then turning aside made their way through forest till they had passed it, and could regain the track again on the further side of it. Upwards they went, marching early and late, and resting in the noon-day heats; and the air became keener and finer as they left the slack and sultry atmosphere which had bred fever in their veins. Hot it was, but now the swoony perfume of jungle gave place to the clear aroma of pines, and nights were cool. Daily the bonds of affection and comradeship between them and their strong cheerful guides grew firmer: the Indians insisted on carrying all the kit and the provisions, so that the English carried only their arms; they offered also to collect more of their tribe to join them, but this Drake refused, saying that they had no need of a larger force. At night they all camped together, and Drake tried to teach them the Lord's Prayer, but whether in Cimaroon translation, or phonetically in English, we are not told. Still upwards they went, chattering and cheerful, but ready at a sign from the scouts to scatter from the track and erase themselves in the forest till the wayfarer had passed. The mule trains moved at night; there were sentries to listen for the sound of their bells. But neither unarmed men nor women, such were Drake's orders, were to be touched. This was needful to be understood, for the Cimaroons would kill any Spaniard, male or female, on sight.

Then one day, the 11th of February, Pedro, the headman of their escort, pointed forward, and through the trees it could be seen that there was no longer fold after fold of wooded hills in front, but just one brow a little ahead, and the sky showed through the pines that clothed it. They had come to the watershed of the Cordilleras, and beyond that final rise the rains that fell and the streams that flowed found their way not into the Atlantic, but into the ocean which no English eye had yet beheld. As they topped the ridge, Pedro took Drake by the hand and led him to a big tree that rose high among its fellows. There were little ladder-like steps cut in the trunk, and up among the branches was built a platform for look-out, where ten or a dozen men might stand. Drake followed his guide up the trunk, and there he experienced perhaps the greatest inspirational moment of his life.

The day was clear: behind stretched the huge plain of the Atlantic, in front lay the Pacific Ocean, and then and there he knelt and besought Almighty God of His goodness to give him life and leave to sail once in an English ship on that sea. This sight must not be his alone; it belonged equally to all the English boys who had fought and sailed with him, and he called them all up to see it, and told them of his prayer. Among them was young John Oxenham, who vowed that "unless our Captain did beat him from his company, he would follow him by God's grace." John Oxenham, in the decrees of destiny, was the first of the two to drive a furrow through those dim waters from which he never returned. But to both this was a Pisgah-sight, not indeed of a promised land, but of a sea, and the sea was ever their route and goal of pilgrimage. From that day, as Camden tells us, that new scene of adventure was never absent from Drake's thoughts.

It was probably from this very spot in 1513 that Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, the first European to set eyes on the

Pacific, beheld the Southern Ocean. He was Spanish commander at Darien, and having heard rumours from the natives that there was a great ocean to the south which could be seen from the hills in a few days' march, he set off with guides to explore and verify, and was taken like Drake to the nearest point at which it was visible. Curiously alike too, on them both, was the effect of the sight of this illimitable extension of the known world. It was one of those magical dawns which illumine the path of the explorer, to behold which is the prime motive power which spurs him on through tropical risks and arctic hardships, and to both Drake and Balboa there came simultaneously with that the craving for possession, so that just as now the one prayed for divine permission to sail an English ship across those waters, so had Balboa desired Almighty God and the Blessed Virgin " to give him good success to subdue these lands to the glory of His name and the increase of the true religion." [1] Balboa subsequently returned to the posture of possession, for on coming down to the Pacific coast he dramatically waded up to his middle in the water, shield and sword in hand, and called upon his men to bear witness that he took possession of the South Sea and (with comprehensive vagueness) " all that appertained to it," for the King of Castile and Leon. It was just to challenge that assertion (which was in the best style of the late German Emperor) that Drake, sixty years later, came to the same place. . . . Keats, it may be noticed, must have had this historical episode about Balboa in mind when he wrote the immortal sonnet, though with poetic licence he attributes the incident to Cortez.

Five years, however, were to elapse before Drake drove a furrow through those waters, and now his immediate business was to intercept the mule trains which were

[1] Southey, *British Admirals*, vol. iii. p. 106, note.

due to be on the move. From the watershed and the tree of apocalypse they began to descend towards Panama. They had taken six days to mount to the ridge from the Atlantic, and now the rate of their going was quicker, for not only was the way downhill, but the men, of whom some had been stricken by that devastating disease, had regained their strength in the finer air, and, above all, the anticipation of imminent adventure, which might develop any hour, speeded their travel. They were now astride the only track from Panama : the spring was advancing, and the Spanish transports at Nombre de Dios were expecting the arrival of the first treasure convoys coming along the track where, unknown to any, Drake was waiting. There he was with eighteen boys from Devon perched in the middle of the enemy's country, with joy in his heart.

Two days' march brought them to the end of the forest and into the open. In front of them now lay undulations of low hills, covered with tall pampas grass, flattening out into the plain. Perhaps the wiser course would have been to have waited inside the edge of the forest, where cover for an ambush was better, and where the steeper ground would have favoured the activity of Drake's young company, and impeded the clumsy movements of laden mules. But his unbridled and adventurous impatience could not put up with inaction : besides, like a magnet of gold, the city of Panama, with its harbour and its shipping, was visible five and six times a day, as they topped the crests of the low hills, and for two days more the little force crept on towards the coast. Far greater caution was needed now, for the view was wider and they could be seen at a greater distance than in cover of the forest, and at any moment they must be ready to vanish into the sea of waving pampas. But on they went, till they came within a league of the town, and there halted while one of the guides went forward into Panama

to get news of the movement of the treasure trains, while Drake, from some little eminence, ambushed in the tufts of tall grass, studied the lie of the streets, meditating perhaps some such mad exploit as that which he had conducted at Nombre de Dios, some swift audacious attack on the town itself. In eager haste the Cimaroon came back with the happy tidings that this very night two trains were setting forth from Panama. Most of the mules were carrying victuals, but there was silver as well, and with the trains there would travel the august Treasurer of Lima, with his daughter, and eight mules carrying gold, and one laden with jewels. Drake instantly retraced his steps, and back they went twelve miles in the direction of Venta Cruz, and halted six miles from it ; this move no doubt was made with the idea of having a shorter and a downhill retreat afterwards with their booty to the secret harbour, where the "Pasha" and the pinnaces were waiting his return.

The mule trains travelled by night for coolness, and thus, since the attack would take place in the dark, Drake made all his men take off their shirts and put them on over their coats, so that the glimmer and the fluttering of shirt tails should distinguish them to the eyes of their fellows in the scrimmage. He laid his ambush at a point which the mule trains would pass before morning, stringing out his men on both sides of the road, so that they could pop out both to front and rear of the mules, and gave orders that none should stir till he blew his whistle. He ordered also that if any one came along the track not from the direction of Panama only, but from Venta Cruz, before the arrival of the mule trains, the deadliest quiet must be observed, so that any wayfarer might pass on without suspecting the ambush and so giving the alarm. The moment was of breathless excitement, for such adventure was the crown of the entire expedition, and the fact that the Treasurer of Lima was

approaching gave it a special importance. So the boys had their supper, and a dram of brandy was served out, and they crept into silent concealment to wait for Drake's whistle. And then ensued the most tragic fiasco.

The mules carried deep-sounding bells, and now these were audible, though still afar off. But suddenly there came another noise from the opposite direction: the sound of a horse's step near at hand and approaching from Venta Cruz, as Drake had foreseen might happen. Then one of his boys, wicked Robert Pike, who "had drunk too much aqua vitae without water," started up from his hiding-place, thinking the mules were coming, without waiting for Drake's whistle. A sensible Cimaroon instantly pulled him down and sat on him, but the harm was done. The Spaniard, riding from Venta Cruz, had seen the flutter of his shirt, and with his suspicions aroused (for why should a young man in a shirt be hiding in the long grass?), put his horse to a livelier pace and cantered off towards Panama. Drake had no idea, of course, what had caused this gentleman to mend his pace, and though he didn't like it, he waited, for soon the music of the mule-bells pealed louder, and presently they entered the ambushed section of the path. Shrill sounded his whistle, out rushed his men, and there was the mule train in their hands. Its drivers showed no fight, and instantly they set to work to rifle the laden panniers which proved to contain nothing but provisions, and of the Treasurer of Lima and his daughter and his gold there was no trace at all. What had happened?

There was a sensible fellow among the muleteers, and he politely explained. There had met them a Spanish gentleman riding down from Venta Cruz, who had seen the suspicious circumstances of a young man starting up from behind a tussock, and he had communicated the fact to the convoy. On which the Treasurer of Lima, with his armed guard and his valuable luggage, had

clattered back to Panama. But the mules, with provisions, might as well go on, and see what the Spanish gentleman's suspicions were worth. He thoughtfully added that Drake and his company would be wise to clear out before the whole country was roused. So there they all were. . . .

Now Drake was a master of powerful expressions, and before he had finished it is probable that Master Pike wished that he was back at Plymouth. When that was over he began to think what was to be done next. Pedro, whom he consulted, put two alternatives before him, the one to get back into the forest, and make a long circuit again round Venta Cruz, the other to make a direct dash through Venta Cruz. They were all weary of marching; they were sick with disappointment, for indeed they had not come all the way to Panama to capture a few sandwiches, and Drake decided to get back by the shortest way possible.

They set off instantly. For the present they could ride, for they had the mules if nothing more. But when they were within a mile of the place, they rode into a Spanish picket, which was always on guard for fear of raids by the Cimaroons. They were challenged, and Drake bawled out that they were English and demanded passage in the name of the Queen of England. That could not be called tactful, and a volley answered him, slightly wounding him, and fatally wounding one of the company. But then the matter was taken out of his hands altogether, for the Cimaroons, finding themselves fired on by the detested Spanish, rushed forward with war-cry and war-dance. They pushed by the English, drove the picket into the woods, harried them, and put them to flight. English and Cimaroons entered the town together, and at the sudden attack of this wild tribe, panic seized the inhabitants, civilians and soldiers alike, and they fled helter-skelter for refuge in the monastery.

Drake barricaded them there, and set a guard, and for an hour or two his men pillaged the town. It was a place where the ladies of Nombre de Dios were wont to come for their *accouchements*, by reason of its more salubrious air, and Drake, with the swaggering gallantry that distinguished him, assured them personally that there was nothing to be frightened of, and wished them well. By daybreak they were out of the town again, and on the way to rejoin the ship. The whole affair, all compassed in the space of a night, was one of his most surprising (though quite unsuccessful) feats, and it must have had the effect of utterly bewildering the Spanish. He had captured a mule train, he had taken Venta Cruz, and now he had completely vanished again. He was weaving round himself that cloak of mystery, surprise, and terror, in which for years, in Spanish eyes, he was to walk enveloped.

To Venta Cruz from the harbour, where he had left his ship a fortnight ago, had been two days' march, but now Drake had with him a tired, broken-shoed, and exasperated company. The whole expedition had miscarried ; they came back empty-handed and disappointed. But there was no time to lose before getting to the ship, for now the hunt would be up, and he hurried his boys along, sometimes by his invincible gaiety and cheerfulness, and sometimes by the pleasing device of grumbling more than anybody, and exciting their sympathy with him. But every mile that they traversed cemented the trust and friendship between the English and the Cimaroons, and devoted and eager, under the personal magnetism of Drake, was their service. They were scouts, they foraged for food, they built huts for the night, and often, if one of the English was fainting and spent with weariness, two of them would easily carry him for a couple of miles. Under their guidance they made steady progress towards the bay where the ship was in hiding.

They were near now, and Drake, remembering the orders he had given to Ellis Hixom, to trust no messenger purporting to come from him, nor any token he might bring unless accompanied by something in his handwriting, could not resist playing a silly prank on him, which at the same time should test his obedience and loyalty. He sent forward a Cimaroon with orders to Hixom to meet him at the mouth of the river Tortugas, and in token of the authenticity of the message, gave him his gold toothpick to show. Ellis Hixom looked at it, and shook his head ; there was no handwriting here, and he began to be afraid that some disaster had befallen, and that this was a cunning trap of the Spanish to bag the rest of them. And then the Cimaroon told him to look more closely at the toothpick, and he saw that Drake had scratched on it with the point of his knife, " By me, Francis Drake." So there was the autograph, and perhaps just as convincing was the feeling that nobody but Drake could possibly have thought of that.

At the anchorage all had gone well : his invalids had recovered, and were eager to start on some fresh foray. What that should be was the question, and Drake summoned all his boys together to hear what they voted for. Some said one thing and some another, and Drake listened very attentively, for, as one of his biographers tells us, he was always willing to hear the opinion of others, though he subsequently followed his own, and they settled to be busy at sea again. This would give rest to his footsore men, would provide them with victuals, and it was to be hoped, prizes : above all, it would cause the Spaniards to think that he had abandoned these raids on land, and would restore their shaken sense of security with regard to their treasure trains. To capture them was still Drake's sole real objective, and these marine raids, though he hoped they would be useful in them-

selves, were chiefly designed to make his next appearance on the Isthmus quite unlooked for.

Surprise and unexpectedness were necessarily the keynote of his tactics, for what could a handful of boys do against any prepared defence? So now, in a moment, like some quick-change artist of the halls, Drake doffed the highwayman's costume, and while the last stanza, so to speak, of his Dick Turpin's song was still ringing in Spanish ears, he was blacking his face, and changing into his pirate make-up. He pushed off in one pinnace, cruising westwards, and, leaving a guard on the "Pasha," bundled the rest of the crew, under John Oxenham, into another, and sent them along the coast eastwards, with the special mission of capturing some provision-laden ship, for the stores at the base were running low, and his men had the appetites of convalescents. "Get along with you, Johnnie," he cried, "and bring back turkeys and fat hogs to fill the larder. . . ." Off they went, and just as if they were a crew of hungry castaways in some boy's book of preposterous adventure, they at once sighted a new Spanish frigate, spick and span and seaworthy, with the precise cargo of which they were in search. They snapped it up, as a hungry pike snaps up a duckling, and setting the crew ashore in one of their own boats, sailed the prize back to the secret anchorage, with pinnace towed behind, within a few days of their departure. Luck also attended Drake, for on his westward cruise he captured a frigate on which there was gold, and had news of a second at Veragua, where there lay yet another with so large a cargo of gold on board, that his mouth must have watered for it. But so strongly was it guarded, that even the genius of his daring was reined in by prudence, and he returned to the base with what he had already won. Down the coast, wherever there were Spanish ships and Spanish troops, ran the warning that the monster Drake was at sea again, playing

"Tom Tiddler's ground and picking up gold and silver." Indeed, as the Fugger Bank correspondent at Seville lamentably moralized, "There is always much labour and sorrow in traffic with New Spain."

So Drake returned from Tom Tiddler's ground to the secret anchorage, and found the new frigate which Johnnie had brought in, and all those turkeys and pigs. That was maddening for the Spaniards, for they had to keep alert all the time, even when Drake was at ease, for fear of his popping out anywhere and anywhen. The new frigate pleased him immensely, and he "tallowed her to make her a man-of-war," and as it was now Eastertide, he kept the festival with good cheer and holiday for all hands. But next day he took the new frigate out for a trial trip, and fell in with something quite unexpected, namely, a big French ship from Havre in great distress for want of water, having only cider and wine on board. Captain Tétu and his crew seemed harmless, feckless folk, and Drake took them into the secret harbour of the "Pasha," and relieved their necessities. Captain Tétu reported the infamous massacre of the Huguenots in August last, and those who wish may believe that Drake's Protestant blood boiled within him, as he remembered his father's flight from Tavistock, owing to these nasty Catholics. But there is no hint of such blood-boiling in the Narrative, and the lines of it are surely sufficiently full of interest to content us without reading between them. Captain Tétu was anxious to be taken into partnership on Drake's next venture, and this Drake agreed to do. It was understood, of course, that he remained in command, just as he had done when he allowed Captain Ranse to join up with him before the taking of Nombre de Dios. Since that first partnership he had lost by sickness or in fighting more than half his original crew, and he was short of hands to guard the base ship, and to take part in the new and most

preposterous raid by land, which was simmering in his mind. That surely, more than a championship of the victims of Catholicism and of Antichrist throned in Rome, accounts for the new alliance.

The French crew had suffered considerable privation from lack of food and water, and Drake gave them five or six days of content and idleness, while his drum beat to him louder and louder as his plan ripened to its music. No doubt he was willing to hear the ideas of his new comrades, but the scheme bears unmistakably in every feature the stamp of his mind, and still more, when it was executed and the utterly unforeseen came near to wreck him and his in huge disaster, was it his genius and refusal to be beaten that pulled so gigantic a success out of the most desperate plight. When French stomachs were in order again, the "Pasha" and the French ship with one pinnace remained in hiding, and the two Captains set sail in the captured frigate that pleased Drake with two attendant pinnaces. The expeditionary force, for its amphibious work, consisted of twenty Cimaroons, twenty French, and fifteen English. Drake had a true sense of that artistic economy about which we hear so much nowadays.

His first scheme (liable to astounding modifications) was to land at the mouth of the Rio Francisco, a small river debouching some twenty miles east of Nombre de Dios, at which point sailors became soldiers, and were to proceed by land. But the frigate drew too much water to approach the coast, and he disembarked the land party into the pinnaces, leaving the frigate to efface herself under shelter of a headland which protected a bay full of small islands, among which a ship could lie hidden and wait for the return of the pinnaces. With them he rowed up the Rio Francisco as far as it was navigable, and leaving a few men on board, told them to go and hide also, but to be back at the same

spot on the fourth day without fail. The pinnaces dropped down the river again, and ensconced themselves in the bay where the frigate lay hid. Drake's diversions by sea had been completely successful, Spanish confidence had been restored on land, and he learned from the Cimaroons that the mule trains were plying daily from Panama to Nombre de Dios.

Now whether Captain Tétu, who was with the land party, had been completely informed as to what Drake's scheme was, is doubtful, for he seems, when the pinnaces vanished, to have been seized (as well he might be) with misgivings as to whether he would ever see them again, and as to what might happen if the Cimaroons, who were Drake's loving dogs for service, but "little regarded" the French, proved treacherous or deserted them. Of course Drake did not know what would happen either, but he reassured Captain Tétu, and began the march. As in all his plans, the supreme merit of this one was its sheer incredibility, for no mule train could possibly imagine that an attack would be made on it at the place he proposed. He was going to lay the ambush within a mile of the west gate of Nombre de Dios itself. So close to the journey's end, the guard would certainly consider that all dangers of the passage were over.

The party that had landed from the pinnaces was now to the east of Nombre de Dios, and their quarry would approach it from the west. It was necessary, therefore, to take to the woods and make a wide detour round the town, well out of sight; this increased the distance to be traversed to some seven leagues. But by nightfall on the second day they had circumvented the town and crept down close to the road where the ambush would be sprung. The heat was intense, and in Nombre de Dios now work in the harbour went on by night, and every one slept during the day. Through the hours of darkness the ambushed raiders heard the hammer of carpenters,

which would cease at dawn, and presently they might expect to hear the sound of mule-bells coming from Panama, for the treasure trains also moved by night. Very early in the morning the Cimaroon scouts, who had been out, returned with the news of pealing mule-bells, a veritable *carillon* of them, for no less than three mule trains were approaching, a hundred and ninety beasts in all, not carrying sandwiches, but laden with silver and gold, and soon, they said, every one would be staggering under the weight of it. Louder and louder grew the rich bells, and right into the ambush came the trains. Drake's signal sounded, the bushes were alive with French and English and with those deadly war-dancing Cimaroons.

The first mule of the three trains and the last of the hindermost were caught, and the hundred and eighty-eight obedient beasts in between, as when a halt was called, lay down. The five and forty soldiers who guarded them put up but a brief fight, and then fled in panic from war-dance and muskets to get help from the town which had just turned in to sleep. One Cimaroon was killed, Captain Tétu was badly wounded in the stomach, but the rest fell on the panniers and tore them open. Silver, as in the days of Solomon, was nothing accounted of that morning : fifteen tons of it they buried in the sand and gravel of a small stream, and under trees, and in the holes of the land crabs. The men loaded themselves with the more precious metal, taking little silver, but meaning to come back, if possible, and fetch the commoner stuff. But by now there was a stir, and the sound of foot and horse approaching, and they all staggered back into the forest again to begin their laden march to where the pinnaces would be waiting. Captain Tétu, once safe in cover, desired to be left behind with a couple of his men, hoping that rest would fortify him ; and before they had gone far on their

way, it was found that another Frenchman was missing. It turned out that he had got drunk, and, not waiting for the Cimaroon guides, had gone on ahead laden with booty, and had lost his way. He was afterwards taken by the Spaniards, and, under torture, revealed where the treasure that they had been unable to carry away was buried.

Then on the heels of this stupendous success came apparently crushing disaster. For two days and a night, staggering under the weight of plunder, the Cimaroons led them back through the forest. All through that night a terrific storm of rain and wind from the west buffeted them, and on the next afternoon, the fourth day after their departure, they arrived at the point of the river where the pinnaces were trysted to meet them. There was no sign of them, but out to sea were seven Spanish pinnaces beating up against the wind from the direction where Drake's frigate and smaller boats had taken cover among the islands. Only one conclusion seemed probable : the English pinnaces had been captured on their way back to the rendezvous, and the land party, with their loads of gold, was cut off. Even if the frigate had not been taken, she could not, by reason of her draught, approach the coast. The crews of the pinnaces, under torture, would reveal the trysting place, and the position of the base where the " Pasha " lay at anchor, and the Spaniards could capture the entire expedition at their leisure.

Drake's indomitable spirit did not quail for a single moment, and his resourcefulness, never so triumphant as in adversity, was *in excelsis*. This was not the time for fear : there was no proof yet that the frigate was taken, nor yet the pinnaces. The proper thing to do was to go and see what had happened to them. He was without a boat of any kind, but last night's storm was bringing down the river the trees which the wind

had uprooted, and they were "offering themselves," so he jubilantly exclaimed, for the manufacture of a raft. His boys waded out into the swollen stream and hooked out these offerings, and they lashed them together, without troubling much about their sodden foliage, and by morning there was *such* a raft. One tree they stripped and hacked into lengths, and one length was fashioned into a mast, and four more into the rudest of oars, and another young tree into an even ruder rudder. For a sail there was a sack that had held biscuits, and so there was made ready the craziest craft that ever swam the sea.

This amazing ark would not hold many, but Drake himself claimed the first place in it, and an English boy volunteered, and two Frenchmen who could swim well and were like to stand in need of that accomplishment. It was launched, while Pedro, whom Drake would not take because he could not row, was left on the bank, beating his breast because he might not go with his beloved Captain. As it was, the raft was overweighted, and not just awash only, for the rowers who stood on it were waist-deep in water, and Drake, as he floundered aboard in the best of spirits, "comforted the company, promising that if it pleased God he should put his foot in safety aboard his frigate, he would, God willing, by one means or other, get them all aboard in spite of all the Spaniards in the Indies!" Off they went, spinning and lurching in the swollen river down to the open sea.

We may just pause to ask what made Drake capable of "comforting the company" he left behind, and of not showing the faintest sign of despondency. It was simply his own supreme confidence which was built on the rock of his faith in God. Two strong supports buttressed it, the one his devotion to his Devon boys whom he had brought into this pass, and whom, by God, he was going to get out of it, and the second, his

complete contempt for anything of which Spaniards were capable.

The craziest of all crafts reached the sea, and now, instead of being only waist-deep in water, his crew of four were up to their necks whenever they met a wave. So great was the midsummer heat that, as we have seen, the Spaniards only worked at night, and yet for six hours, with the burning sun smiting on their heads and the salt spray and water beating on them and cracking their skins, Drake kept his crew going, as they rowed and drifted towards the bay in which, possibly, was still his frigate, and looked out for his mis-trysted pinnaces. The gale from the west had ceased, and the Spanish pinnaces gone on their way ; presently a breeze from the east arose. Six hours had they been at sea, and they *had rowed twelve miles, but now the sun was near setting.* The scorching heat was over, but darkness was at hand, and what then ? Drake had no idea, but he was doing his best, and that sufficed him. The east wind freshened, and the clumsy oars could make but sorry progress.

Away to the dusky east he saw two specks on the water that drew rapidly nearer. As they approached, he thought he recognized them, and at last, when he was certain, he declared to the three men with him that " they were our pinnaces, and that all was safe, so that there was no cause for fear." He signalled to the boats, waving the biscuit sack, but night was falling, and, failing to see his signal, they were presently out of sight again behind a headland. Drake waited for their reappearance, but waited in vain, and surmised that they had gone ashore for the night. Instantly he beached his crazy craft and proceeded to run across the hilly promontory that separated them, and " so willed the other three with him, as if they had been chased by the enemy." He had captured a mule train, and for two days and a night had trudged through the tropical forest laden with

spoil; he had made a raft, and for six hours had rowed up to his middle in water beneath a blazing sun, and now, when night had fallen again, so far from spent was he, that he ran himself and made the others to run from the sheer force of his stupendous will and vitality.

Drake found his pinnaces behind the headland, and then came the explanation of that mis-tryst. That gale from the west had sprung up, and row as they would, they could make no headway against it. And then he must have his joke, for when in turn the captains of the pinnaces asked him how he had fared, he answered coldly, "Well." That was his stoic way, as they knew, of taking misfortune, and they feared that things had been far from well. And then Drake's grey eyes twinkled as he saw their discomfiture, and he took out of his breast pocket "a quoit of gold, thanking God that our voyage was made."

But he bethought himself of the men he had left behind on the bank of the river where the pinnaces should have met him, and he could not prolong their suspense for an hour more than was necessary, nor indeed risk their pursuit by the Spanish. Off he set again at once, and while night was still black, he was rowing up the river down which, breast-high in water, he had come that day, with an oar in one hand and a misshapen tiller in the other. His boys were waiting for him, and he could not delay their comforting. Before dawn he had them all aboard the pinnaces, and the Cimaroons as well, and the great treasure of gold. They dropped down the river again, sailed to where the frigate was still in safe hiding, and rejoined the two ships at the base. They unloaded the treasure, and in the big weighing machine they parted it, silver and gold, into two equal halves, one for the French and one for the English crew.

But there was still Captain Tétu and the two Frenchmen who had been left behind with him to be rescued

and Drake, having got his men safe back to their base, set about this : there was also, it must be remembered, fifteen tons of silver which they had buried, and which was possibly recoverable, for they did not yet know that the cache had been rifled by the Spanish. He organized a party under the guidance of the Cimaroons, and rowed back, for the third time, to the mouth of the Rio Francisco. Then, as once before at Nombre de Dios, when his men carried him back wounded to the pinnace, so now, with the same mutinous affection, they would not allow him to come further, and, under John Oxenham, landed without him. Of the missing men they picked up one, but Captain Tétu and the other had been captured. They learned also that the silver which they had been unable to carry away with them had been found. But it was worth while going to have a look, and though the ground had been dug up for the distance of a square mile, they found some fifteen bars of silver, with which they returned.

"The voyage was made," and Drake prepared for the return homeward. He broke up the "Pasha" and put his crew on to the frigate they had captured, the spick-and-span frigate which had pleased him so much. But he still wanted a small ship to carry provisions, for the frigate was laden with more precious stuff, and there was a good chance of picking one up at Magdalena, where Spanish victualling ships often put in. He had to pass by Cartagena, and instead of making a discreet circuit out to sea, he chose to sail close in ashore. In the harbour was a great Spanish fleet, and as a final gesture of contempt for the whole lot of them, Drake sailed across the very mouth of the harbour in full sight of them all, with the flag of St. George flying from his maintop and silk streamers and ancients down to the water, in full fig of triumph. Next morning he captured a small frigate laden with hens and hogs and honey,

and putting its crew ashore (very content to be treated thus), he sailed off with it to his hiding-place among the islands, and there for a week they remained, storing provisions and careening. The dainty pinnaces, which had so often proved their high-bred qualities in pursuit and fight, could not traverse the high seas, and so, in order that they should not serve the Spanish, Drake broke them up, for the Cimaroons coveted the iron-work.

Finally, there were those same trusty guides and allies to be left behind. Drake told Pedro and three others to inspect everything he possessed and choose for themselves whatever they liked, and he put out silk and linen for their wives. What, above all, took Pedro's fancy was a scimitar which Captain Tétu had given Drake, and which he had seen as Drake was opening his trunks for their inspection : nothing else, in Pedro's eyes, was comparable to that scimitar. But he had an idea that Drake highly valued it, and though he did not like to ask for it, he got one of the men to let Drake know how wildly he desired it. So Pedro got his scimitar " with very good words," and protested that it was dearer to him than his wife and children. In return he begged Drake to accept four pieces of gold : Drake added them to the common treasure.

While still in Spanish waters they took a few more useful trifles, like a pump for the frigate, and caught two hundred and fifty turtles, which were salted and made pleasant eating : but we must apply drastic division to the statement in the Narrative that besides all the immense booty of bullion, they had taken, from first to last, the greater part of the two hundred Spanish vessels which plied between the ports of the Main. . . . Then the sails were set for the homeward voyage, and swiftly the shores of their El Dorado grew dim.

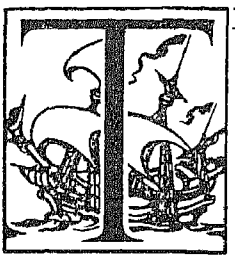
So favourable were the winds, and so handy and

speedy these two Spanish ships which had taken the place of the "Pasha" and the scuttled "Swan," that in twenty days from leaving the Cape of Florida they passed the Isles of Scilly, and so arrived at Plymouth on Sunday, about sermon time, August 4th, 1573. The preacher's sermon was spoiled, for news came into the church of Drake's return; the thrilling whisper spread from pew to pew, and presently the preacher was addressing empty benches, for the entire congregation stole out, and flocked down to the quay-side. They could hear a sermon every Sunday, but it was not every Sunday that Francis Drake came home from the Spanish Main. . . . I think the preacher must have pronounced a hurried doxology, and followed his flock.



CHAPTER VI

THE START OF THE VOYAGE OF CIRCUMNAVIGATION



HE excitement over Drake's return which had emptied the church that Sunday morning grew ever higher as the tale of his adventures spread from mouth to mouth. Out of the Plymouth taverns it streamed like torrents in spring over the West Country ; none could drink of that heady liquor without laughter and exhilaration, and Drake became the idol of his countrymen, just as he was fast becoming the terror of Spain. His adventures showed him to have all the qualities which the public adores : infinite gaiety and resourcefulness in tight places, titanic energy that never spared itself, bland ignorance of what fear meant, and a prodigious appetite for dashing deeds. The hold of his frigate gleamed with the gold that was the harvest of piracy and highway robbery, and since most men, even the properest, have some trace of boyhood still lighting up their adult and respectable moments, all felt the glamour of one who was the incarnation of such tip-top lawlessness. And indeed, was there not also a just claim behind his magnificent thieving ? For he had been engaged, so he absolutely insisted, in retrieving what the Spanish had robbed him of at Rio de la Hacha and San Juan ; if there was a balance in his favour so much the better. Drake was at war with the King of Spain : he had been singeing his

beard, and a rollicking account he and his boys gave of it. Nor was the King of Spain only the butt of his defiance: he had been making rude faces at the great clergyman of Rome, who, by virtue of his apostolic authority, had declared that the sea and all that in it is, and America and all that in it is, belonged to his dear child at Madrid. A monstrous Papa! He had laid down, too, that no faith or solemn oath need be observed in dealing with heretics, who, if taken by guile or in fair fight, might be tortured to death by Holy Inquisition for the good of their souls. But the gay home-coming pirate had never debased himself to that sanctified level: never had he touched a woman or an unarmed man, never had he killed his prisoners or treated them otherwise than kindly, and at the end had always set them free. The glamour of the pirate was wedded to admiration of a great-hearted man, who compelled devotion by his breezy humanity and by his magnetic personal charm. Faults he had in plenty; he was short-tempered, violent, autocratic, vain—and how he could swear! But these are not the faults that estrange: they rather endear, for who wants a mild and milky hero? What he had done and what he was made men's hearts to dance, and caused them to be boys again. From Elizabeth on her throne down to the guttersnipe in the slums, all England hailed him as just the man for them.

But Elizabeth had to do her dancing in the strictest privacy: there must be no Spanish Ambassador behind a screen when she danced, for Drake's return just now, with his Spanish gold and his Spanish frigates, was not a matter for official mirth. During his absence great changes had taken place in the political situation, and the year 1573 was marked by a serious intention on the part of the Queen and her Government towards an amicable adjustment of the points at issue between England and Spain: there was even the hope of an alliance. That

could never have solidly materialized, for the seeds of English supremacy at sea had already been sown and were already vigorously sprouting, and that growth was incompatible with the growth of any friendship with Spain. Spain would never have looked smilingly on when her naval supremacy was being challenged, and, though English official policy just now favoured the friendship, the whole undercurrent of national feeling was against it. Drake's adventure, moreover, was a hint (and a broad hint) as to the vulnerability of Spanish sea-power, and was nationally recognized as such.

Politically, then, his return was an embarrassment; just when a friendly feeling on the part of Spain was so desirable, if any treaty was to be arrived at, he came swaggering up the Sound laden with Spanish gold, and the Spanish Ambassador knew it. Though it would perhaps be going beyond the mark to say that if Drake's punishment for piracy had been insisted on, it would have been impossible for Elizabeth to refuse, without endangering the *pour-parlers*,[1] it was certainly impossible for her to dance in public. She had before now professed an entire ignorance of contraband operations against Spain, when she was a shareholder in such ventures, and though, as later events show, she must have privately rejoiced over Drake's demonstrated contempt of Spanish sea-power in the Indies, she and her ministers must be unaware that his return had interrupted a sermon, and set the countryside ringing with glee. It was wiser, then, that Drake should vanish (he was an adept, as weary watchers on the Spanish Main knew, at vanishing), for he was at war with King Philip, while his Queen was for the moment anxious to make a solid peace with her detested Brother. It is at least likely, then, that it was with Elizabeth's approval and connivance, that he was told he had better disappear, for his presence might cause

[1] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 197.

awkward questions to be asked by the Spanish Ambassador. So Drake vanished for a year and a half.

Now Stow[1] makes a definite statement as to what happened to him; he tells us that "immediately on his return he furnished at his own expense, three frigates with men and munitions, and served voluntary in Ireland under Walter Earl of Essex where he did excellent service." The dates fit nicely, for it was within a week of Drake's landing that Essex sailed for Ireland on a commission from the Queen to restore that perpetually turbulent province to order. Such a commission was not uncommon: the leader of it had the right to pay his expenses and make something for himself out of any sort of plunder, and he was doing a patriotic service. The system was an odious one; it led to the cruellest pillages and massacres, but it saved Elizabeth the pains of sending a regular force to Ireland, which it would have been inconvenient to do. At the same time, if it was privately undertaken under Royal sanction, it might easily be made lucrative. In spite, however, of Stow's definite statement, Sir Julian Corbett insists that Drake did not join Essex's expedition till towards the close of it in 1575, and suggests that he lived *perdu* in Ireland until the peace negotiations with Spain had broken down. It is necessary, therefore, to examine with all respect the views of so careful a historian before preferring Stow's statement (which he rejects) to his argument.

This argument is based on two grounds. The first is, that "in the recesses of Queenstown Harbour, a notable haunt of pirates in Tudor times, is a land-locked creek which still bears the name of 'Drake's Pool,' and here persistent tradition says he used to lie hid and pounce out upon Spanish ships."[2] That it was thoroughly Drakian to do that sort of thing, is shown by the voyage

[1] Stow, *Annals*, p. 807.

[2] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 192.

to the Spanish Main, but the argument will not stand examination. To begin with, there is nothing to show that this creek was not called Drake's Pool before he went to Ireland at all, nor is there anything to show that it was not called Drake's Pool (if, indeed, its name has anything to do with Francis Drake) before 1575, when he admittedly joined Essex's expedition. Unless, in fact, there is reason to believe that the creek was not called Drake's Pool till after 1573, but before 1575, there is no ground here for rejecting Stow's statement, and affirming that during this time he was in Ireland, but not with Essex.

The second reason why Sir Julian rejects Stow's statement is that Drake's name appears in Irish State Papers in 1575, but not before. There he is mentioned in a pay-sheet as Captain of the "Falcon," with certain sums due to him, and the argument is that since this is the first mention of him, he was not with Essex before that date. But there was the strongest reason why Drake's name should not have appeared previously, for the whole point of his disappearance was that Elizabeth should be able to say that she had no idea where he was, and could not possibly lay hands on him : whereas, if he was patently commanding a ship in Essex's expedition, as proved by Essex's disbursements, the diplomacy of his disappearance would have been incredibly futile. Such reasoning, moreover, does not get rid of, but rather confirms Stow's further statement that he was serving at his own expense, and, no doubt, recouping himself with plunder.

The political situation, however, made it desirable that for the present Drake should not have an official status as Captain of one of Essex's ships. While the negotiations with Spain were going on, it was far wiser that officially he should vanish. But during the course of the next year (1574) these negotiations broke down,

for Philip put on foot certain naval preparations, which were clearly directed against England, and which made any pretence of friendly *pour-parlers* as hollow as Drake's drum. Admiral Menandez persuaded the King to equip a large squadron which should cruise about the mouth of the English Channel, and keep an eye on marine movements there. This step was partly defensive, and as such completely justifiable, for it was calculated to prevent the starting of piratically-disposed ships for the Indies. As Drake had demonstrated, when once they got there, it was a very different matter : they could, when handled by a conjurer like him, play hide-and-seek in the inlets of that wooded coast, and get fat on treasure before they could be hunted out. But if the King kept a squadron of light, swift vessels in northern waters, he would make it far more difficult, if not impossible, for these wasp-like craft to buzz forth from their nest at Plymouth and settle on the honey of gold, and thus the treasure ships, with their slow escorts, could get home without being stung.

But these measures of King Philip were not solely defensive ; they had an obvious offensive policy involved in them, for a further item in the scheme was the seizure of the Scilly Isles, and the establishment of a Spanish base there, which would be highly convenient for making trouble in Ireland. This part of the programme was never carried out, for some species of virulent plague broke out in Menandez's fleet. He himself died of it, and the fleet, more than decimated by disease, was broken up. But the assemblage and purpose of it, namely, to patrol the mouth of the Channel, and turf up the wasps' nest, was a definite act of hostility which rendered ludicrous and phantasmal any further pleasant conversations, and the effect, as far as we are concerned, was that Drake's diplomatic disappearance need be continued no longer. It had served its purpose,

for the treasure he had brought had been unloaded with all possible speed and divided up, the two Spanish frigates (the one in which he sailed home, which had so "mightily pleased him," and the victualling ship) had sauntered out of the Sound again, and the Spanish Ambassador might make what enquiries he pleased in Plymouth, as to where everybody was, and would not be one pennyworth the wiser. Meantime Drake, unofficially attached to Essex, was harrying Spanish raiders on the Irish coasts, and keeping the seas safe for Essex's movements. Now, with clear hostility frowning through the smiling mask of Philip's agreeable conversation, any reason for not interrupting his friendly professions had vanished, and Drake could cease to do so, and appear on Essex's pay-sheets.

We may take it, then, that since there is no reason to doubt Stow's statement, Drake went straight off to the Irish coasts. Of Essex's campaign there—if a series of brutal plunderings and massacres can be called a campaign—it is not necessary to say much ; the massacre at Bruce's Castle, an infamous operation conducted by John Norreys, seems to have been typical of the rest. Ireland was certainly in a very disturbed and seditious state, which was aggravated by treasonable commerce with Scotland, and small Spanish craft were plying about the coast intent on making trouble for England at home, and encouraging the Irish in rebellious disaffection. Something had to be done, for the state of the country was a standing menace, but Essex's expedition more resembled an Israelitish raid on Hittites and Amalekites than civilized warfare. In these land operations, in which Scots and Irish were hunted and slaughtered with a callous ruthlessness which was utterly alien to Drake's methods of war against the national enemy Spain, and to his known humanity towards captured or surrendered prisoners, he can have had no part, for his

business was on the sea, where he was attacking and capturing Scotch frigates and the Spanish craft which infested the coasts and were opening communications with the Irish rebels. At other times he acted as transport for Essex's troops, but of his actual engagement and exploits there are but the most meagre and trivial records, and if we pass lightly over his part in this Irish expedition, it is not for fear of incriminating him in Essex's undoubted brutalities, but because nothing is known about it.

The Irish expedition, closely followed by Essex's death, came to its bloody close in 1575, and, when Drake returned to Plymouth, he found that John Oxenham, who had been his right-hand man in the voyage to the Spanish Main, had already started on a venture of his own. Oxenham, as we know, was a devoted follower of Drake's ; together they had seen that first view of the Pacific from the Pisgah-tree on the watershed of the Isthmus, and when Drake had prayed that one day he might sail an English ship on that sea, Oxenham had sworn that " unless he beat him from his company he would follow him by God's grace." But Oxenham, who was not of sufficient importance to be recommended to disappear, had got weary with waiting for his Captain's return, and had gone off on a brilliant piracy of his own. His expedition, therefore, from which he never returned, is irrelevant to Drake, and it need only be said that with the help of the friendly Cimaroons, he had built a pinnace on the upper waters of a river that debouched into the Bay of Panama, and was thus the first to realize Drake's ambition of sailing on the Southern Sea. Of his adventure and of its future disastrous end in the hands of the Inquisition, Drake knew nothing as yet, though he had talked over with Oxenham the general lines of the plan that had been seething in his head ever since he had the first sight of the Pacific. It was on a far

bigger scale than anything he had attempted yet, and for its accomplishment the sanction and support of the Queen were necessary.

Now, though the Irish expedition is almost a blank with regard to Drake, something had happened there which led to events of profound significance in his career: he had met there a man who was more truly his enemy than all the hosts of Spain, and by the strangest aberration of judgment, had formed an intimate friendship with him. This was Captain Thomas Doughty, a man of high elegance and education, a scholar in Greek and Hebrew, a lawyer of the Temple, and of, apparently, high religious convictions, but one to whom intrigue was as the breath of his nostrils. Already he had made trouble between Essex and Lord Leicester, the upshot of which was that Essex, who had at one time implicitly trusted him, found himself so grossly and malignantly deceived, that he refused to have anything more to do with him. The man, no doubt a rogue, was polished and plausible, but even so it is psychologically puzzling to understand how one of Drake's extreme directness, and of his sound judgment in his estimations, can have so warmly attached himself to so crooked a fellow. Probably Doughty was a man of great personal charm, and we must remember also that Drake was very fond of flattery, and very fond of a fine gentleman. Moreover, Doughty certainly persuaded Drake to believe (and that not without foundation) that he had influence at the Court and with Elizabeth's ministers. In any case, Drake completely trusted him, and (no doubt also thinking that Doughty would be useful) confided to him the scheme on which his heart and head were set, namely, to sail through the Strait of Magellan, furrow the waters of the Pacific with an English keel, and play havoc with the Spanish treasure ships, which, built at Panama, brought to the Isthmus the golden harvests of Peru.

His dream had developed even further than that, for John Oxenham, when examined by the Inquisition, said that Drake had often told him that if the Queen would give him leave he would sail the Strait of Magellan, and found settlements over there in some good country.[1] The idea of colonization, therefore, it is extremely interesting to note, had entered into Drake's mind, though probably that of circumnavigating the world was not part of his original scheme. Piracy, pure and simple, though of high adventure, was the main objective, and so sumptuous a piracy might easily interest the Queen. She would, it was hoped, be a shareholder, and, according to her invariable custom, would, if her Brother of Spain was seriously annoyed, disclaim all connection with it. That for twenty years before the Armada was her policy with regard to Brother Philip ; she wanted to inflict all possible injury on his West Indian trade short of provoking him to go to war. It was just a question of how much Brother Philip would stand. Greed of gold and fear of the Spanish Navy were the two ruling motives in her amazing statecraft. Drake cordially shared the first, but widely differed with regard to the second.

Such was the position when, shortly after the end of the Irish expedition, Drake joined Doughty in London, in order to get the Queen's sanction and secret complicity for the voyage. Elizabeth's ministers were sharply divided as to the right policy to pursue with Spain. Lord Burleigh, the Lord Treasurer, was consistently opposed to such marauding expeditions : he still worked for all he was worth towards securing some amicable understanding, while Walsingham, Secretary of State, less prudent, but with more clear-sighted vision, saw that any lasting friendship with Spain was impossible, and of his mode of thinking was Christopher

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 15.

Hatton, now Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, and high in favour with the impressible Queen. Elizabeth meantime hopelessly and endlessly vacillated between these irreconcilable policies. She had great respect for the solidity of Burleigh's judgment, but her spirit itched for adventure, and her fingers for Spanish gold.

Into this atmosphere of intrigue came Doughty, completely in Drake's confidence, and drawing long breaths of the refreshing air of intrigue in which he flourished. He had obtained the post of secretary to Hatton, and subsequently claimed to have interested him and Walsingham in the scheme, while Drake asserted that Essex had recommended him to Walsingham after the Irish campaign, and that he obtained Walsingham's support himself. The two accounts, though conflicting, are not necessarily contradictory, for it is possible that Doughty may have interested Hatton, and Hatton, on his sketch of the project, have talked it over with Walsingham, while Drake, recommended by Essex, went independently to him. Walsingham, in any case, highly approved, and wanted Drake, map in hand, to explain where and how he proposed to operate, and to give him a signed statement of the whole project. Drake, most sensibly, refused to do this, for he acutely pointed out that the Queen was but mortal, that she might (God forbid) be dead when he returned, and her unknown successor be friendly to Spain, in which case his signed statement would surely be his death-warrant.[1] The fate of Sir Walter Raleigh affords ample justification for Drake's prudence, for though ever willing to take risks, he had no fancy for so loaded a hazard. Even as it was, the death of the Queen during his voyage might have been highly embarrassing, and the first question he asked, when he got home from the circumnavigation and anchored in Plymouth Sound, was whether the Queen

[1] Hakluyt Society, *The World Encompassed*, p. 216.

was alive and well. Walsingham did not insist on the signed statement, but went straight to the Queen with his oral report on this conversation, and the Queen sent for Drake.

The Queen's conduct of that interview was intensely Elizabethan. She hailed Drake's scheme with enthusiasm; she promised him to take shares in cash, which demonstrated the genuineness of her goodwill; but with that passion for double-dealing which she preferred to any straightforward policy, she insisted that not only must she be in official ignorance of the whole matter, but that Burleigh must be in real ignorance of it. Burleigh, she knew, would oppose the voyage with a force that she might not be able to resist: he would frighten her with gloomy prognostications of serious annoyance (and no wonder) on the part of Brother Philip, and she did not like being frightened. But if Burleigh did not know, he could not frighten her. Let Drake, therefore, push on his preparations as fast as he could, with her express and solid sanction, though at the same time she knew nothing whatever about it. But Burleigh's ignorance must be of stouter quality than hers.[1] And she slapped Drake on the back, and told him he was the only man who could do it.

Now it was impossible long to conceal the fact that a large sea-going expedition was on foot. Drake easily got his syndicate together to finance it: he had a thousand secret crowns in his pocket from Her Majesty, and the promise of ships of the Royal Navy, and he enrolled eager

[1] Mr. H. R. Wagner (*Sir Francis Drake's Voyage around the World*, p. 26) propounds the theory "that the expedition was entirely one for trading purposes, directed for the Moluccas and perhaps China." Among the many fatal objections to this view are, (i) there would have been no reason for concealing it from Burleigh, if this was the case; and (ii) the expedition, instead of taking the fabulously difficult route which included the passage of Magellan Strait, would have sailed eastwards.

volunteers from Plymouth and London, both for his crews and for the troop of gentlemen adventurers for operations on land. The Spanish agent, de Guaras, was perfectly aware that something was going on, and so also was Burleigh, but it was given out that the expedition was to sail to Alexandria for peaceful purposes of trade ; the crews signed on for this easterly voyage, and Alexandria continued to be the public pseudonym for Panama till sails were set. So well was the secret kept, that de Guaras appears never to have guessed the true destination of it.

But Burleigh sat down to think. . . . There was that swashbuckler Drake privately conferring with all those who favoured a rupture with Spain : he was having interviews with Walsingham, with Hatton, with Hawkins, and was being received in private audience by the Queen. But he could not believe in this Alexandrian destination ; there was a secret of which he was kept in ignorance. And it seemed to him that Drake had a bosom friend who might know something, and who, though pledged to secrecy, took a Cretan view about pledges. He sent for Doughty and had an interview or two with him. Drake heard that Doughty had been seeing the Lord Treasurer, from whom all information must be withheld, and roundly asked Doughty what his business with Burleigh was. He can have had no serious suspicions about his friend's honour, for Doughty's assurance that Burleigh had offered him a post as his private secretary quieted them completely. But Doughty, on his own subsequent confession, had told Burleigh that Alexandria was a blind, and that the expedition was to sail for Panama. He had, in fact, committed the first of those treacherous deeds for which in the end he paid with his life.

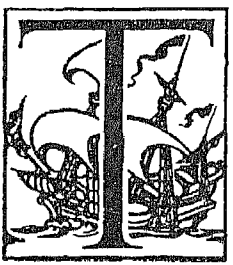
Burleigh had not time to take any steps to stop the project which flouted his own policy, and which, he can

have had no doubt, the Queen had deliberately concealed from him. Alternatively, he may have realized his helplessness in opposition to such strong support, and have thought it more dignified not to make a protest which he knew would be futile. Then suddenly the whole affair became beyond the power of any party, however influential, to hinder or delay. De Guaras was found to be treasonably corresponding with Mary Queen of Scots, and was clapped into the Tower. War fever raged like pestilence through the country, Drake posted down to Plymouth, and on November 15th, 1577, the most dramatic of all his expeditions put to sea.



CHAPTER VII

THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF DOUGHTY



HE authorities for this voyage are various, and often differ to the point of mutual contradiction. Chief among them (though not always to be accepted without reserve) is (1) the narrative entitled

THE WORLD ENCOMPASSED BY SIR FRANCIS DRAKE.

This was compiled by Drake's nephew from notes made by Francis Fletcher, Chaplain to the expedition, and was published in the year 1628. It will be alluded to as the Authorized Narrative.

(2) Next, we have a manuscript, once belonging to John Conyers, Pharmacopolist, which is a copy of Fletcher's actual narrative. The compiler of the Authorized Narrative is here proved to have based his story on Fletcher's narrative, for many sentences are verbally identical, but there are, notably in the account of the Doughty trial, important discrepancies between the two. The Fletcher manuscript embraces the first part of the voyage.

(3) The third is the narrative of John Cooke, who sailed on the "Elizabeth." His account only takes us up to the completion of the passage of the Strait of Magellan, for the Captain of the "Elizabeth," John Winter, losing his flagship in a storm on the Pacific, made no attempt to keep the rendezvous on the coast of

Peru, which Drake had appointed, but deserted and sailed back to England.

(4) The fourth narrative is anonymous, and though Sir Julian Corbett assumes Francis Pretty to be the author, there is no reason for attributing it to him, or indeed for supposing that he sailed on this voyage at all. He wrote the account of Cavendish's *Voyage round the World*, and this may have led to the confusion. The anonymous narrative contains little that we do not find elsewhere.

(5) Various smaller documents, of which the most important are the depositions of Nuño da Silva, a Portuguese pilot, who accompanied Drake (involuntarily) from the African coast to Guatulco on the Pacific coast: the narrative of Edward Cliffe, mariner, which covers the same ground more or less as Cooke's; the subsequent depositions of John Drake, who on this voyage was still a young boy and page to his cousin the Admiral, and was afterwards captured by the Spanish. We have also certain depositions made by various witnesses at the trial of Doughty, and some scattered memoranda which relate to the voyage. Nearly the whole of these are most conveniently brought together in a volume of the Hakluyt Society published in 1854 under the title of *The World Encompassed*.

This voyage opened far wider horizons than any of the adventures on which Drake had hitherto been engaged. He had sailed, in a subordinate position, with Lovell and with John Hawkins, on small businesses of slave trade, and these voyages had ended in disaster. Then, himself in command, he had, as we have seen, gone playing "Tom Tiddler's ground" and "Hide-and-seek" on the Spanish Main: these sports had been highly lucrative, and confirmed his contempt of Spanish sea-power. This voyage to the Main had both popularly

and professionally made his reputation as a leader of unexampled daring and resource, and we find him now in command of far the biggest naval enterprise that had yet been sent out to raid the private seas of King Philip's private continent, and he had for it the approval and partnership of the Queen and the war party of her Council. Its object was no mere adventurous and piratical raiding on the Atlantic coast, but an attempt to cut the main artery that pumped the gold blood of Peru into Spain, severing it by the destruction of the Spanish fleet on the Pacific side of the New Continent. He had spoken to John Oxenham about planting settlements in "some good country," and possibly there was in his head some idea of doing this in Peru itself. Peru would have been cut off from Spain: why not link it up to England? Drake never, as far as we are aware, definitely mentioned Peru as the site of his settlement, and now, as always, his plans were elastic, but it seems likely that he conceived that they might stretch to this.

To arrive at the scene of action at all he had first to navigate the Strait of Magellan, a feat which, since Magellan had accomplished it fifty-seven years before, had never been successfully repeated. Either the attempt to pass the Strait had failed, or, on the one occasion when it had been successful, disaster had followed: no commander had ever made his home-harbour again after negotiating the Strait. But now Drake's object was not only to get through the Strait, but, after making the passage, still to be an efficient fighting force against the Spanish ships in the Pacific, which were built at Panama. Having smashed them up, there would still lie before him the return through the Strait laden with gold. What their fighting strength was no one knew, and so Drake was proposing to find that out. It is no wonder that Spanish wits never guessed the whole scope of the prodigious adventure. In a sense

Drake failed, in that he did not carry out his programme, but his failure set the world ringing with the news of a feat of seamanship such as the world had never known yet.

He was in command of an equipment which, like the object he had in view, was larger than that of any previous English voyage of trading or exploration. The flagship, in which he himself sailed as Admiral (or, in current phrase, as General), was the "Pelican" of a hundred tons and an armament of eighteen guns. Next came the "Elizabeth" of eighty tons and sixteen guns, under the captaincy of John Winter (of doubtful memory), and the "Marygold" of thirty tons, with the same armament. The victualling ship was the "Swan," a new vessel of fifty tons, called after the efficient little fowl which he had himself caused to be sunk in her nest on the Spanish Main; Thomas Moone, the conspirator carpenter who had bored those three secret holes by her keel with his spike-gimlet, was in charge of the "Benedict," a fifteen-ton pinnace. As before, there were several other pinnaces stowed away in sections to be put together when needed, for Drake had well-justified faith in the value of these handy boats. An ample store of firearms, of ammunition, of bows and arrows was carried: nothing had been spared in the matter of equipment. He had a great taste, too, for pomp and finery (encouraged, no doubt, by that accomplished and elegant gentleman, Captain Thomas Doughty), and on his flagship he carried fiddlers to make him music, and the vessels of his table, and even of his kitchen, were of pure silver, which, no doubt, had already travelled in bars from the Spanish Main; and there was fine oak furniture[1] in his cabin, so that wherever he went all might admire "the civility and magnificence of his native country." His page, who stood behind his chair, was young John

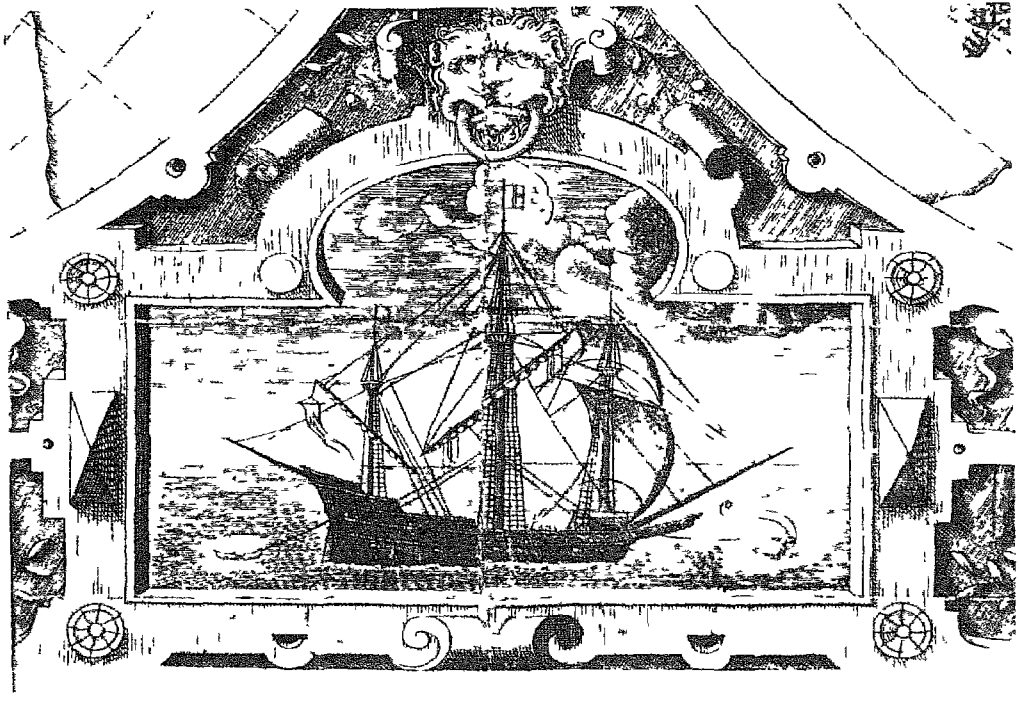
[1] Now in Berkeley Castle.

Drake,[1] a boy of fourteen and the Admiral's orphaned cousin, son of his uncle Robert : the boy had come to live with Drake four years before, and had gone on the Irish campaign with him. His crews and company numbered in all one hundred and sixty-four men and boys, but he would have done better with two less, for among them was Captain Thomas Doughty,[2] and John Doughty, his younger brother : these two, with Francis Fletcher the Chaplain, and Drake's youngest brother Thomas, all sailed (for the present) in the "Pelican" with the General. And, finally, he carried a drum ; not that psychic drum in his soul which never ceased beating, but one which could join in making music with his violins, and on which, at his return, he would emblazon the arms which the Queen gave him. All round the world it went with him, and is in existence to this day at the house he bought from Sir Richard Grenville.

The opening of the voyage was strangely unlucky. Even before a start was made, there had been, so the Authorized Narrative tells us, disquieting rumours about, of which Drake had been informed. They were to the effect that Doughty, his intimate friend, to whom he had confided the secret of the voyage, had indulged in seditious and treasonable talk, and had hinted at his intention to cause mutiny and to murder Drake. The passage concerning this in the Authorized Narrative is one that must be treated with caution, but according to it Drake refused to listen to such wild tales, and pooh-poohed the whole matter. Not knowing that Doughty had already been guilty of the grossest treachery in

[1] Mr. Froude (*English Seamen*, p. 87) confuses this boy with John Drake, the Admiral's brother, who, he tells us, sailed on this voyage. John Drake, brother of the Admiral, had been killed in the expedition to the Spanish Main.

[2] Mr. Froude (*English Seamen*, p. 87) tells us that there sailed on one of the sloops "a mysterious Mr. Doughty." Doughty (not mysterious) was in the "Pelican."



THE PELICAN, RECHRISTENED THE GOLDEN HIND

revealing his real destination to Burleigh, he treated him with undiminished confidence and intimacy : indeed, at first he seems to have lavished on him almost unnecessary marks of his esteem, and to have somewhat roused the jealousy of his other officers. Without a shadow of suspicion in his mind the fleet dropped down the Sound, but before the ships were clear of the Cornish coast, they ran into a violent gale which badly damaged the " Pelican " and other ships, and forced them to put back into Plymouth for repairs, and it was not till December 13th that they finally left the English coasts. Not till they were out of sight of land did Drake let it be known that the Pacific, not Alexandria, was the real destination of the voyage.

The fleet made a straight course for the west coast of Morocco, piratically picking up a few insignificant prizes and furnishing the store-ship with fresh fish and fowl, before striking out on the ocean voyage to South America. Among these prizes was a smack which took Drake's eye, and he put the captured crew, with his blessing, on to the " Benedict," and took on this new craft of forty tons in her place. She was more than twice the size of the discarded pinnace and far better adapted for the ocean voyage, and she was christened the " Christopher " in compliment to Hatton. They then sailed for the Cape Verde Islands, to finish their victualling, and presently fell in with two fine Portuguese passenger ships, one of which not only had a well-furnished wine-cellar aboard, but a pilot, Nuño da Silva, who knew the Brazilian coast. Pilot and wine-cellar and ship all pleased Drake, and he took them along with him on his course to the island of La Brava, which was his last point of call on this side of the Atlantic. The ship was rechristened the " Mary," and to show how utterly he disregarded the tittle-tattle (or so he regarded it) about Doughty, Drake put him in command of the prize. He transferred to it also his youngest

brother, Thomas Drake, who was then in his twenty-second year,[1] among the prize crew. A stronger mark of confidence could scarcely be imagined: he gave Doughty a ship and put his brother in his charge. At the island of La Brava, Drake proposed to release the Portuguese passengers who were now on the "Mary," and to rearranging her as a victualling ship. Doughty had orders to keep the cargo sealed till the arrival there.

The fleet cast anchor off La Brava, and Drake's trumpeter, Brewer, who had also been transferred to the "Mary," came on board the "Pelican," and told him that Captain Doughty had stolen articles of value from the cargo of the prize, and he could produce witnesses in support of the charge. Drake instantly went across to the "Mary" to investigate this, and was met by Doughty, who denied it, but brought an identical accusation against Thomas Drake. That an ordinary seaman, as Thomas Drake was, should be able to pilfer a cargo which, by the Admiral's orders, was still sealed, was highly unlikely, but among Doughty's effects there were found "some Portugal gloves, some few pieces of money of a foreign stamp, and a small ring." Doughty asserted that these were tokens of esteem given him by the captured passengers. But however paltry the acquisition, the principle that everything on board a prize was the property of the whole company must be kept inviolate, for its infraction opened the door to anybody appropriating what he chose, and we have already seen how in the voyage to the Spanish Main Drake threw into the common stock the pieces of gold that the Cimaroon Pedro had given him, though these were a return gift for Drake's scimitar. The accusation, moreover, made by Doughty against Thomas appeared utterly unfounded, and Drake's extremely short temper completely boiled

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 301.

over, and he told Doughty, "with great oaths," that he had conspired not against young Thomas, but against his General. Perhaps the stories which he had heard before, but had dismissed as tittle-tattle, flashed across his mind, for he deposed Doughty from his captaincy of the prize, and sent him back to the "Pelican," and in order to mark, in his characteristic and impulsive way, his scorn of Doughty's accusation against his brother, made young Thomas captain of the "Mary" in his stead. Before long, however, at the intercession of Vicary, a lawyer friend of Doughty's, who was one of the gentlemen adventurers in the "Pelican," the quarrel was made up.

At present no serious suspicion of Doughty's real character seems to have been aroused in Drake. The man certainly had committed a breach of discipline, whether those trumperies had been pilfered from the cargo, or presented to him by passengers, and he had tried to fasten the accusation made against him on Thomas. Drake had given him a bit of his mind, oaths and expletives had pelted like hailstones, but his essential faithfulness to a man he had trusted was not yet disturbed, or if it was, he acted as if it was not. The quarrel had now been made up, he wiped it off his mind, and to show that his confidence in his friend was unshaken (perhaps also slightly repenting of his violence), Drake remained for the present in the "Mary," and put Doughty in command of the gentlemen adventurers on the flagship. Another view of this reconciliation, however, suggests itself, and it is perhaps open to question as to whether Drake's confidence in his friend was really restored, or whether, in reinstating him in a position of trust, he was not giving him rope to hang himself. This view has something to support it, for certainly, when Drake sent back his toothpick as a token to Ellis Hixom on the Spanish Main, he did lay a sort of trap to test his loyalty,

and this re-appointment of Doughty, after his ignominious dismissal from the "Mary," may bear a similar interpretation. But whichever way we take it, Doughty remained in a position of trust.

There were a few days of preparation at La Brava before the ocean voyage began. Drake took the Portuguese passengers off the "Mary," and putting them on one of the pinnaces which he had brought out in sections and now set up, gave them a good stock of provisions and wished them a pleasant voyage back to Santiago. Such a clemency, though habitual with Drake, was far in advance of the general custom of the time, which would have been to have saved trouble by tipping them overboard, while had Drake belonged to the Spanish school of seamen, he would have tortured them first for the good of their souls and for the sake of any information they might give him. But he kept Nuño da Silva, the pilot of the captured ship, to sail with him, for he knew the Brazilian coasts and harbourages. It would be pleasant to believe, with Sir Julian Corbett,[1] that Nuño da Silva, when he heard of Drake's objective, eagerly volunteered to take service under him, but we must reluctantly reject that, for Nuño da Silva very explicitly states that Drake took him by force out of his ship, and kept him as likely to be of use.[2] His testimony, therefore (when we come to the trial of Doughty), was not likely to be biassed in favour of Drake. . . . These arrangements made, the fleet set off for the South American coast, Drake remaining in the "Mary."

Doughty's position in the "Pelican" requires definition. She carried, in addition to the crew, a body of gentlemen adventurers and other soldiers, and of these Doughty was captain. In command of the crew was its Master or Captain, and in his hands were all matters

[1] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 233.
[2] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 257.

connected with the navigation of the ship. As the fleet was now starting on its ocean voyage, the soldiers for the present (with Doughty in command) were little more than passengers. Drake may therefore have considered that Doughty would not be able to do any harm, and at the same time he would be giving him a chance of conducting himself properly, and proving his loyalty. But Doughty certainly mistook this generous treatment for weakness, thereby proving that he knew Drake as little as Drake knew him (for though Drake had many weaknesses, weakness was not one of them), and he proceeded at once to make a noose in the rope that had been so liberally paid out to him. He called the whole ship's company together as soon as sails were set and blue water severed the "Pelican" from the "Mary," and made them a speech which he represented himself as charged to deliver from Drake. Navigation, he told them, was in the hands of the captain, Thomas Cuttill, but Drake had received from the Queen a unique commission, which gave him power "*to punish at his discretion with death or other ways offenders*," and he committed this authority in his absence from the "Pelican" to himself.[1] This speech is of the greatest importance in view of what subsequently happened at Doughty's trial, for it shows that Doughty believed that Drake had authority to inflict the death sentence. What is frankly incredible is that Drake ever delegated this power to Doughty, for the simple reason that, apart from the improbability of Drake's ever parting with a shred of his authority, it was impossible. A judge of the Criminal Courts might as well be supposed to order a juryman to pass sentence of death on his behalf.

[1] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 236 (quoted from Harleian MSS.). This is corroborated by Fletcher, who, without giving the speech, says that Doughty was thought to be taking upon him "too great a command." *The World Encompassed*, p. 62, note.

In order to prove his own high qualities, and set a fine example of loyalty, Doughty then proceeded to tamper with the crew and with the master, Thomas Cuttill: he told Cuttill that "he had a good liking for him," and if he found him "the same man afterwards that then he did," he promised to give him £100, "to stand between him and the danger," and to keep him in the Temple from my Lord Admiral and all officers." With Cuttill he may have had some hope of success, for Cuttill did not, in pursuance of his plain duty, send over to the "Mary" and report the matter to Drake.[1] Chaplain Fletcher also was aware that there was mutinous talk about, but Doughty persuaded him not to report it, for fear that Drake would suspect him of having something to do with it, which indeed was a very just apprehension on Doughty's part. So Chaplain Fletcher was induced to hold his tongue: the American coast was still a long way off, and Doughty hoped to brew a satisfactory atmosphere of mutiny and discontent before it was sighted.

The weather favoured his plans. They ran into belts of contrary gales and violent storms, and between the storms into zones of windless calm, where all day the ships lay rolling and sweltering, and that was fit weather for Doughty's work, for it made good soil of idleness and discomfort for the seeds of discontent, of which he was a deft sower. Never in Drake's experience had there been such continuance of evil winds and windlessness; all day long in the "Mary" he was cursing at these

[1] Hakluyt Society, *The World Encompassed*, p. 155. There was a curious sequel to this, mentioned only by Cooke. Shortly before Doughty's trial, Drake had knowledge of this, and asked Cuttill about it. Cuttill "in great fury" thereupon waded off to the mainland, saying that he would rather be eaten by cannibals than bear false witness. It is at least as likely that Drake threatened him for not having reported the incident. In the end, Cuttill was taken back on to the ship again. The whole story is too ambiguous to be evidential. (*The World Encompassed*, pp. 198, 199.)

damnable delays, and wondering how matters fared on the "Pelican," and how his generosity had been appreciated. Never had he encountered such hindrances in his crusades against the Spaniards, the enemies of himself and his God; it really seemed as if the devil had taken charge of the weather, as if sorcery and magic must be working against him. Like all sailors he was superstitious, and like the whole world at that time, he entirely believed in witches and Satanic agencies whose aid could be invoked by spells and black arts. There was that gale which had put him back into Plymouth again, and since they had left the African coast there had been nothing but contrary winds and oily calms. Could it be that he was carrying with him some malignant controller of the elements, who, by his incantations, was responsible for these adversities? He began to brood over that. . . .

Or it was night, and for coolness he lay on deck. His brother was there by him, and neither could sleep for the heat. As the ship rolled, he could see the lights of the "Pelican," and again he wondered how Doughty was conducting himself. It had been a monstrous and unfounded accusation that he had brought against young Thomas, that he had pilfered the cargo of the prize. . . . And then there were the stories about his mutinous talk before the expedition had sailed at all. Drake had refused to credit them, but somehow they had stuck in his mind, and now perhaps he asked himself if he had been wise to dismiss them so carelessly. The man certainly had been treacherous and false about his brother. . . . And then this weather, this series of contrary winds, with never a sailing breeze: surely some witch, some master of black arts was at work against him. As he grew drowsy, the two threads of thought, separate hitherto, began to weave themselves together, and now he was broad awake again, definitely asking

himself whether Doughty was at the bottom of it all. These superstitious imaginings, now knit into more solid strands of suspicion, began to gain force and reality.

Drake had occasion one Sunday morning to send over to the "Pelican" his trumpeter Brewer, who had accused Doughty of pilfering the prize cargo. He was welcomed there with some piece of horse-play, ill-befitting the reception of the General's messenger, and Doughty had a hand in it. It was close upon the hour for prayers, and Brewer hurried back to the "Mary," where he told Drake what had happened. Drake was furious that the chief officer on the flagship should have done anything so utterly unbecoming to his position, and off skimmed the boat again to the "Pelican," with orders for Doughty to come over at once to the "Mary." Drake went to read prayers to his men, and as he knelt there, he heard Doughty's voice hailing to be taken on board. He rose, and called over the side to him to stay where he was, and told the sailors who rowed him not to take him back to the "Pelican," but to the "Swan," and give him in charge to the captain, John Sarocold. His unbecoming conduct on the "Pelican" perhaps was reason enough for his deposition, but there was more in Drake's mind than that, and he must have given utterance to the dark suspicions over which he had been brooding, for as soon as Doughty got on board the "Swan," he told the captain that he was sent there as a prisoner "and as one suspected for a conjurer."[1] From that day till the axe set him free, Doughty was under surveillance or arrest.

It was fifty-four days after leaving Cape Verde before the fleet sighted land again on April 5th, 1578. Nuño da Silva tells us they first landed to get water at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata, but from other

[1] Hakluyt Society, *The World Encompassed*, p. 166.

accounts it is clear that they made the coast north of this point.[1] There Drake found further grounds to think that magic was the root of all his ill-luck, for on their approach the natives made spells and incantations "to cause shoals to arise in their course" and storms to break, and sure enough there drove up a prodigious tempest of thunder and rain, accompanied by terrifying darkness. When it cleared, the "Christopher" had disappeared. Drake had gone back to the "Pelican," probably on Doughty's transference to the "Swan," and for three days he searched for the missing ship without success. Hardly had she rejoined when the "Swan," with Doughty on board, disappeared also: this happened in calm weather, and was most mysterious. On the top of that came another storm, and when it passed, Drake found that the prize ship, the "Mary," was missing as well as the "Swan." At this Drake's dark imaginings broke out, and he kept on inveighing against Doughty as a witch and a conjurer, and the author of all this foul weather.[2] He found willing ears to speak to, and a corroborative confession to back him, for John Doughty, the culprit's younger brother, had been heard to boast that he and Thomas "could conjure as well as any men, and could raise the devil, and make him to meet any man in the likeness of a bear, a lion, or a man in harness."[3] But the worst devil they had raised for themselves was Drake's determination, which he now seems to have formed, to put an end to this.

It is necessary here to trace separately the external progress of the voyage and the inward development of the case against Doughty. Drake just now, as regards the latter, was convinced that he was a master of black arts, but there, for the present, the matter stayed, since

[1] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. xi. p. 107.
[2] Hakluyt Society, *The World Encompassed*, p. 195.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

the "Swan" which carried him had disappeared. Meantime, the ships had watered at the mouth of the River Plate, but he could find no good anchorage there for the careening that they needed after the protracted voyage, and they moved southwards in search of a suitable haven. On land, if we may trust the narrative of Chaplain Fletcher, there were phenomena of unusual interest to be observed, most of which must be omitted as being insignificant stories, with no bearing on Drake or on exploration. But it is impossible to pass over the picturesque history of the giants and the ostriches.

All the country south of the River Plate was found to be inhabited by a race of giants, the breadth of whose sole was larger than the length of any English foot. Evidently some doubt was subsequently cast on the Chaplain's observations, for at the end of his narrative the transcriber adds a note in defence of the existence of these giants, accounting for their prodigious size by the ingenious suggestion that it was the result of their diet consisting of equally monstrous ostriches, the argument being that if a man had a diet of fleas he would become a microscopic man, and that if he had a diet of elephant flesh he would become elephantine. These ostriches (on which the giants fed) were fully as remarkable as their consumers, for they had Captain-ostriches who drilled them to march in line, and who corrected them "in a chiding voice" if they did not march properly. The giants, however, were a little cleverer than these gifted fowls, for when they wanted provisions one of them dressed up in an ostrich skin, grazed with the others, and by edging away out of line led them by degrees to where an ambush of giants lay in wait, with men, women, dogs, bows, arrows, stones, cudgels, and nets, ready to kill or capture them. These giants were good, kindly folk, and one morning, as the sailors ashore were having a

glass of Canary wine, one of them took a taste of it too, and was so instantly intoxicated by it that he fell flat down, and his friends thought he had been poisoned. But the clever fellow kept hold of his glass, and when he got sober again, drank the rest of it, and liked it so much that every morning he came for his dram of Canary wine. They produced fire by rubbing two pieces of wood together; music and dancing were their chief delights, and such good benevolent giants were they that Fletcher says they were kinder to him than many of his clerical brethren at home had been. In other places sea-fowl settled on the persons of himself and his companions in such numbers that they fainted with the effort of pulling them off each other, and were in danger of being absolutely suffocated by them. . . . Chaplain Fletcher, in fact, seems to have been a most remarkable observer, and throughout the voyage saw more than his share of astonishing things. It is perhaps less astonishing that the Authorized Narrative, which was compiled from his notes, omits the greater part of them, and is very dubious about the size of the giants.[1]

Now, since their arrival off the coast of America, ship after ship had been missing, and the fleet had been employed in little else than looking for them. May was already more than half over, and now, when the "Swan" was sighted again, Drake determined to break her up and take her crew on to the "Pelican," which was short of hands, as she had supplied most of the prize crew for the "Mary." With Doughty among them they came on board, and Drake called for the master of the "Swan," John Sarocold, to hear what report he had to give of Doughty's conduct while in his charge. Grim grew his face as he listened, for once again Doughty had

[1] *The World Encompassed*, p. 60. Fletcher's entire narrative, which is of the most entertaining and gossipy kind, is now printed in *The World Encompassed* (Argonaut Press, 1926).

been busy encouraging discontent and fomenting mutiny. He had urged John Chester, who was captain of the soldiers, to depose Sarocold by force, and had promised him his support, saying that he would make the ship's company ready to cut each other's throats : he had asserted that his own authority was equal to Drake's, about whose private life he knew certain discreditable secrets. Sarocold had reminded him that they would soon be at the place where Magellan had hanged two mutinous officers, but Doughty pooh-poohed the warning, saying that Drake had not Magellan's authority. While the " Swan " was being broken up, Drake, in spite of all that had come to his ears, took no further step : probably he was considering what to do, and meantime Doughty remained, apparently under arrest, on the " Pelican."

Then suddenly the storm burst : Drake and Doughty had been talking together, and after " unkind speeches " had passed, Doughty (according to one account) said that " the lightest word that came out of his mouth was to be believed as soon as the General's oath." [1] At that Drake lost control of himself altogether. He struck him, and had him tied to the mast in pillory. When those sun-stricken hours were over, Drake ordered that he and John Doughty should be slung on to the " Christopher," and the two never met again till they faced each other at the trial. Immediately afterwards another tempest broke out, and once again the ship that carried Doughty disappeared.

Indeed, it was enough to make the stoutest materialist believe that some malign control was brewing spells against him. Enough, too, had happened in ways less occult to convince Drake that Doughty was doing his utmost to ruin the success of the voyage. Wherever he had been (and already he had sailed in four ships)

[1] Anderson, *Captain Cook's Voyages*, p. 382.

there had been trouble. He had pilfered the cargo of the "Mary," and tried to shuffle out of that with slanders; he had tried to corrupt the master and crew of the "Pelican," where he had publicly arrogated Drake's authority; he had played the same treacherous game on the "Swan." The "Swan" had gone astray when he was on her; now, on his transference to the "Christopher," she had vanished also. Trouble within had marked his baleful presence on every ship, and then, too, there was this inexplicable continuance of foul weather, of contrary winds and calms, of storms unprecedented and blacknesses of the noonday. And Drake, it must be remembered, was anything but a materialist: his faith in the Divine protection was the strongest driving force in his character, but he believed also in evil and appalling potencies that befriended and obeyed the witch and the sorcerer. For week after week the most persistent ill-luck had dogged him, and from whom could that have come but from the Arch-enemy of God, working through the spells and black magic in which the younger Doughty had avowed that he and his brother were adepts and masters?[1] How could this expedition arrive at success if he carried with him the author of all these adversities, who, apart from his spells, had also shown himself a master in the school of treachery? As yet, too, but the preliminaries of the voyage had been engaging him, but now he was approaching the first great adventure, the passage, if God willed, of the famous and ill-omened straits, which must be surmounted before the real quest, against the treasure ships that plied from Peru to Panama, began. If this voyage, which up till now should have been a mere placid progress to the scene of operations, had been so beset with sinister hints of devil work, with

[1] Such beliefs were universal. The Church recognized the existence of witches and appointed exorcists. Sumner, *History of Witchcraft*, p. 226.

what force might that be expected to burst forth when the hazards of the arduous sequel faced him ?

After three days of search the "Christopher" was sighted again, and Drake made up his mind to break her up also : there was still a ship too many and a man too many in his squadron. As they lay at anchor, he went on board the "Elizabeth," and summoned the crew together. He told them he was about to send on board the two Doughtys, "the which he did not know how to carry along with him this voyage and go through withal." Thomas Doughty, he told them, was a conjurer and a seditious fellow : John Doughty, a witch and a poisoner. He warned the crew not to speak to either of them, and "he willed that great care should be taken that they should neither write nor read." With that he went back to the "Pelican" without seeing either of the brothers, who presently, now in strict arrest, were brought on board the "Elizabeth." Drake subsequently sent a further order to them "commanding them as they would answer for it with their lives, not to set pen to paper, nor yet to read but what every man might understand and see." [1]

Now these precautions leave no room for doubt that Drake truly and soberly believed that the two brothers were in league with the Devil, and the injunction on their reading or writing clearly means that they should not use their mysterious books of magic or indite their spells. One distinction, however, he made between the brothers. They were both witches, but Thomas Doughty was also a seditious fellow, and it was for sedition that the imminent trial took place. John Doughty (though a witch, and, as we shall see, kept under surveillance) was not proceeded against at all, and in Drake's indictment of his brother, no word is said of witchcraft.

It was not till June 19th, 1578, when the diminished

[1] Hakluyt Society, *The World Encompassed*, p. 200.

fleet was within a few leagues of Port St. Julian, that the "Mary," so long missing, joined up again. On putting into the bay an attack was made on a small landing party by natives, which might have been serious, had not Drake's swiftness of resource extricated them from an awkward situation : as it was, he lost his gunner, Robert Winter. From here three days' sailing would bring them to the entry of the Strait of Magellan : they were now on the threshold of the adventure which had drawn them to the confines of the known world. On the shore lay a "spruce-mast," which the men conjectured to be the gibbet of Magellan's executions fifty-eight years ago ; and digging at the foot of it, they found the evidence of human bones.[1] From the wood of the gibbet the rather *macabre* cooper of the "Pelican" made tankards for such as cared to drink out of them.[2] But that the sight of these relics, and the associations of the place, suggested to Drake's mind the grim fitness of re-christening the spot with the blood of another mutinous officer, is surely a most mistaken view.[3] His mind was made up : he had already affirmed that the voyage, of which the real hazards were now to begin, could not succeed while Doughty was there to ruin it. The cumulative evidence of Doughty's seditious behaviour, and of the misfortunes which Drake believed were due to his spells, had convinced him of that, and now he meant to act. He brought his whole company ashore, and summoned Doughty to appear before him.

It seems clear that Drake would have been justified in executing Doughty out of hand, on the authority which he had received from the Queen, without the

[1] Hakluyt Society, *The World Encompassed*, p. 69.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 68. . . . Mr. Froude (*English Seamen*, p. 88) tells us that a skeleton was hanging on the gallows, the bones of which were picked clean by vultures, but nobody else seems to have seen it.

[3] Corbett, *Life of Drake*, p. 72.

procedure which he now adopted. He had ample evidence, in the depositions made at the trial, of the man's mutinous spirit, and of his attempts to corrupt captains and crews. He was also firmly convinced that Doughty contributed a standing menace to the success of the voyage, though that conviction was partly based on his belief that the two Doughtys had been raising storm and tempest by black arts. But he did not proceed against the younger Doughty, nor did he make the charge of witchcraft (however implicitly he believed it) a part of his indictment. Sedition and mutiny were the sole grounds of it. Cooke, who throughout his narrative makes the case as black as he can against Drake, accusing him of murder and tyrannical blood-spilling, gives the words of the indictment, and if we accept them as accurate, we shall certainly not be taking a view that is biassed in Drake's favour. In them there is not a syllable about magic. The indictment, according to Cooke, was as follows :

"Thomas Doughty, you have sought by divers means, inasmuch as you may, to discredit me to the great hindrance and overthrow of this voyage, besides other great matters which I have to charge you, the which, if you can clear yourself withal, you and I shall be very good friends, whereto the contrary, you have deserved death."

Doughty denied the charge in general terms, and it was then perfectly open for Drake to produce his witnesses, and execute him on their evidence, which was ample. But he did nothing of the sort, and instead asked the prisoner how he would be tried. Doughty asked to be taken back to England and tried there.

This was clearly impossible. Drake would have been obliged either to abandon the expedition altogether, or to detail a ship from his already much-diminished squadron to take him home, or to have carried along with him, for the adventure to whose threshold they had come,

the man who had already been guilty of inciting mutiny, and whose presence he considered was a standing menace to success. He naturally refused to take any of these courses, and said that he would impanel a jury and try him on the spot.

Now Doughty, in his bombastic speech to the crew of the "Pelican," it will be remembered, had said that the Queen had given Drake a commission which included the power of pronouncing the death sentence, and that Drake had delegated that authority for the time being to him. But now, perhaps with the effrontery of despair, he said, "Why, General, I hope you will see that your commission is good," though he had already publicly affirmed its validity.

So far we have followed (and accepted) Cooke's narrative, but with regard to this commission it is impossible to believe his statement that when, later on in the trial, Drake was to produce his commission for the inspection of the jury, he could not find it, and said he must have left it in his cabin, the inference being that he never had it at all. The statement is palpably false, for the Portuguese pilot, Nuño da Silva, who was present at the trial, and who was no partisan of Drake's, describes in detail how Drake produced certain papers, kissed them, and read them out, subsequently letting the jury inspect them. "All present," writes Nuño da Silva in his deposition, "saw the papers were his and from her (Queen Elizabeth), and that it was by her authority that he was executing Doughty."[1] Drake also subsequently showed this commission from the Queen to Don Francisco Zarate.[2] With such evidence it is impossible to suppose (as Cooke hints, and as Sir Julian Corbett considers likely) that Drake had no such commission,[3] while that such a

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 279.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 209.
[3] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 257.

commission was not unusual is proved from the narrative of Drake's voyage to the Indies in 1585, on which he executed two men for civil and not military offences.[1]

But if we reject Cooke's evidence about Drake's commission, we must equally reject the account given in the Authorized Narrative (which has no support in the notes of Chaplain Fletcher, from which Drake's nephew affirms he compiled it) that as soon as witnesses were produced, "the gentleman"—for he never mentions Doughty's name—"was stricken by remorse, and acknowledged he had deserved not one death, but many": and that Drake was so moved by this, that "not able to conceal his tender affection," he withdrew from the trial and left the jury to come to their verdict. This is as palpably false as the other, for Drake had long regarded Doughty with violent enmity as the curse of the expedition, as a rank mutineer and a witch, and there is abundant evidence to show that he was present throughout the trial. Moreover, if Doughty had then and there confessed, there would have been no need for the jury to have considered the evidence at all.

Drake then, after Doughty's untenable proposal to be taken back to England for his trial, empanelled a jury of forty: how he selected them we do not know, but it seems to have been an impartial jury, for on it were Fletcher, who was certainly a partisan of Doughty's, Vicary the lawyer, who was his chief ally, while the foreman was John Winter, who subsequently proposed an alternative to the sentence of death. Witnesses were produced, and among them Edward Bright, who swore to Doughty's mutinous talk before the fleet left Plymouth. The witness and the accused wrangled over this, and Doughty let slip that Burleigh, the Lord Treasurer, from whom all knowledge of the voyage was by the Queen's

[1] Naval Records Society, vol. xi. (*Log of the Primrose*), pp. 10, 17.

orders to be withheld, had been told of it. Drake instantly denied that Burleigh could have known of it, and, on Doughty's repeated assertion, asked how. "He had it from me," said Doughty.

This admission seems to have occurred early in the trial, but, in a sense, it was the climax of it. Drake denied that it was possible that Burleigh knew, and Doughty, stung into reckless contradiction, spoke the truth, and by his answer admitted a fresh treachery that Drake had never so much as suspected. His reply to Doughty's admission was simple enough. The man had condemned himself out of his own mouth as guilty of the grossest treachery in this matter of the Queen's orders, which Drake himself must have confided to him in the days when he looked on him as a trusted friend.

"Lo! my masters," he said, "what this fellow hath done, God will have all his treachery known, for Her Majesty gave me special commandment that of all men my Lord Treasurer should not know it."

Further evidence from Cuttill, Sarocold, and others having been produced, Drake put the question to the jury as to whether Doughty was guilty or not. He did not, it must be observed, ask them whether he was guilty of having betrayed the secret of the voyage to Burleigh, for Doughty had confessed to that, but whether he was guilty on the indictment. Vicary the lawyer, who was on the jury and had patched up the first quarrel between Drake and Doughty, thereupon told Drake that the jury was not legally competent to condemn a man to death. Drake, with a gibe at "crafty lawyers," answered that the jury was not asked to do anything of the kind, but only to pronounce on his innocence or guilt with regard to the accusation against him. This was perfectly sound, for Drake's commission from the Queen gave him power of life or death; the jury

(whom Drake had voluntarily appointed, thereby putting a check on his own prerogative) only had to say whether he was guilty or not. They pronounced him guilty, and thus Drake had in his support the concurrence of forty voters.

He then duly and in order produced his commission from the Queen, the existence of which, though denied by Cooke, is, as we have seen, amply vouched for by the account of Nuño da Silva. Yet still he did not act independently on it, but put the further question to the jury as to whether, in their opinion, Doughty deserved death, calling for a show of hands.

The verdict was that he deserved death. Probably it was unanimous, as there is no record of any dissentient, and Cooke, rising to the very felicity of malice, rather implies this, accounting for the vote by the suggestion that some held up their hands for fear of Drake, and that others were holding up their hands in supplication to God for delivery from this "cruel tyrant." So prodigious a statement carries its own refutation, for we cannot believe that, if forty men are asked to put up their hands for the express purpose of signifying their condemnation of a prisoner on trial, any of them could be so absent-minded as to forget that this gesture recorded their vote, and that they did so only because they were occupied in private prayer.

Drake, thereupon, using his commission for the first time, now that Doughty's guilt and also the deserved penalty had been confirmed by forty independent votes, passed sentence and "pronounced him the child of death, and persuaded him withal that he would by these means make him the servant of God." He fixed the execution for the day after the next, but it is evident that he was still willing to spare his life, if any means could be devised whereby the voyage might continue without the daily risk of a repetition of his former offences, for he

added that if any one, himself included, could think of such a plan between now and the day after to-morrow, it should be adopted. Doughty asked to be put ashore in Peru, and Winter, foreman of the jury and captain of the "Elizabeth," offered to be responsible for his safe custody. Drake, after consideration, could not accept this: probably he doubted Winter's loyalty, and the event proved him right, for after the passage of the Strait, when the fleet was again dispersed by a storm, Winter, instead of proceeding to the rendezvous which Drake had appointed, persuaded his crew to abandon the expedition, and returned to England. No other suggestion was put forward, and the order for the execution stood.

Now, was Drake's conviction that Doughty by spells and magic was brewing evil for the success of the enterprise, a factor in his instituting this trial? I think we may say, from a study of the various narratives, that it undoubtedly was, and that Drake was sure in his own mind that he carried with him a master of black arts who could imperil, and already had imperilled, the expedition. To the modern mind the idea is monstrous, and Drake, if he had executed Doughty for being a magician, would be classed by us among the abominable judges who burned cross-eyed old crones with callousness and indeed enthusiasm. But whatever his convictions as to this were, it cannot be too clearly pointed out that it was not on them that he acted, nor does the charge of witchcraft, as we have seen, enter into his indictment. No such evidence was produced against Thomas Doughty at all, though in the depositions his brother John was mentioned in this connection. But Drake did not try John Doughty, but Thomas Doughty, and he tried him on the charge of mutinous conduct, and on that alone, with the vote of his entire jury to back him, he passed sentence of death.

And then, whatever was good in Doughty assumed command of him. His treachery, his mutinous intrigues, of which there can be no reasonable doubt, had failed; he was beyond the hope of any reprieve, and he met his fate with piety, with gallantry, and with gaiety. He asked to be allowed to receive the Communion, and that his Commander should partake of it with him. This was done, and when the two, kneeling side by side, had eaten of the Sacred Feast, they had dinner together once more as friends, and they talked cheerfully and drank to each other's welfare. When that was over, Doughty asked for a few minutes' private conversation with Drake (but what passed between them was never certainly known), and then the procession moved off to where the block was ready. Doughty knelt and prayed for the Queen and for the prosperity of the adventure in which his share was finished, and begged Drake to forgive any whom he might suspect as having been in conspiracy with him. Drake gave that promise, and duly observed it. Then Doughty laid his head on the block, with Sir Thomas More's jest about the shortness of his neck, and there died a black traitor and a very gallant gentleman. The severed head was held up for all to see; justice and not vengeance had been done, and Drake, who, an hour ago, had received the Sacrament with his friend and drunk to his welfare, told his company the significance of the accomplished tragedy: "Lo! this is the end of traitors," he said.

Drake seems never to have told any one what Doughty's last words to him in private were, and the most reasonable conjecture is that they were a confession of his guilt, and perhaps a plea for forgiveness. The communication must have been of some solemn and final sort, an affirmation of innocence or a complete confession, and the first may be ruled out when we consider not only Doughty's bearing, but Drake's inexorable epitaph, "Lo! this is

the end of traitors." Iron-souled he was, and one to whom duty, above all, was "Stern Daughter of the law of God," but it is impossible to imagine such a man making this pronouncement, if these last words had been a final protestation of innocence on the part of one who had been a trusted friend. Besides, if they had been a protestation of innocence, Doughty would surely have delivered them with all possible publicity, instead of asking for privacy.

So, judging as best we may between the conflicting evidence of Cooke's violent hostility to Drake and Drake's nephew's no less misplaced piety, we are forced to believe that if Drake erred in the strict administration of justice, he erred on the side of leniency in his procedure. Not only was he entitled by the Queen's commission to pronounce the death sentence and cause it to be carried out, but even without that it was his duty, if he believed that one of his officers fatally risked the success of the voyage, to put the voyage as his first concern. Nor did he use his undoubted authority without support. The jury, impartially selected, adjudged Doughty guilty on the indictment, and on a show of hands voted that he deserved death. And even then, Drake promised that the death penalty should not be inflicted if any means could be devised whereby Doughty's life could be spared without again endangering the hopes of success. So, on the confines of the known world, reluctant justice was done, and we must believe that vengeance was as far from Drake's mind as, at that moment, misplaced clemency.

Though, in the light of the narratives, the charge on which Doughty was tried seems simple and sufficient, there have always been those who have seen political considerations and intrigues behind it. Sir Julian Corbett, for instance (though he does not explicitly adopt it) puts forward a "solution that meets all the known

facts," and suggests[1] that Burleigh was at Doughty's back, and that Doughty's mutinous behaviour on the voyage was not only connived at, but instigated by him, in order to induce the crews to refuse to take the ships into the Pacific for the treasure-hunting of which Burleigh so strongly disapproved. From what we know of Burleigh's character, this seems totally incredible. Presumably Doughty's information as to what the destination of the expedition really was reached him too late to enable him to stop the voyage (which doubtless he would have done if he could), but that he commissioned Doughty to foment mutiny on the ships, with all the black and murderous sequel which might have resulted, passes the bounds of belief. Doughty perhaps knew that if he succeeded in his mutinous attempts he would find a powerful protector in Burleigh when he returned, but that the sage and upright Lord Treasurer was instigator of so fiendish a plot as to sow mutiny in the fleet when at sea, cannot be accepted. Doughty, a born intriguer, a man to whom the confidence of Drake's friendship served only as a smoke-screen to conceal further treacheries, was, so we must believe, acting on his own innate crookedness, not on the instruction of one whose long and honourable record does not justify us in attributing to him, without a single particle of real evidence, so diabolical a design.

More ingenious, but not more credible, is the theory that Lord Leicester (though in a very different sense) was the secret influence behind Doughty's trial and execution. Doughty had openly hinted that Leicester had poisoned Lord Essex with a view to marrying his wife, as Leicester subsequently did. So the suggestion arose that Leicester suborned Drake to take Doughty on this voyage, and see to it that he never returned. Camden mentions the story as no more than injurious

[1] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. pp. 342, 343.

gossip, but it was known and remembered nearly sixty years later, for in 1641 there appeared a poem in pamphlet form called "Leicester's Ghost," in which that guilty spirit says :

> "I doubted lest that Doughtie would betray
> My counsel, and with other party take.
> Wherefore, the sooner him to rid away
> I sent him forth to sea with Captain Drake,
> Who knew how t' entertain him for my sake.
> Before he went his lot was by me cast:
> His death was plotted and performed in haste."[1]

This pretty story, however, is unsupported by any evidence, and is disproved by all we know of Drake's friendly relations with Doughty, unless we suppose that he was the most consummate traitor, not excepting Judas, that the world has ever known.

Throughout July, mid-winter in the south, the fleet remained at St. Julian, and it was not till the middle of August that Drake took in hand the reconstruction which alone could ensure a prosperous future for the voyage. The danger spot, the focus from which discontent and mutinous suggestion had been undermining the discipline without which Drake knew that he could never bring the expedition through, had gone, but that was only the first step towards creating the needful fellowship of spirit. Doughty's mischievous tongue was silent now, but the evil it had wrought must be remedied, and that was Drake's first task. Whatever his suspicions of others, especially of Doughty's brother, may have been, he made, as he had promised, no further enquiry, and set himself to restore. He took the highest line, and in accordance with that faith in Divine power on which his nature was built, he appealed to the best in every man of his company, and gave the order that all hands, from

[1] Campbell, *Lives of British Admirals*, pp. 434, 435.

cabin-boy to captain, should make their confession to the Chaplain, and receive the Sacrament. That, in his view, was the first step towards unity and brotherhood.

Then he took practical hold of the situation, and summoned the whole company together. Chaplain Fletcher thought that his services might be acceptable, and suggested a sermon. Drake told him that there would be a sermon, but that he proposed to deliver it himself. He went straight to the root of the matter, and, without any reference to Doughty, told them that want of fellowship between gentlemen-soldiers and sailors was the cause of mutinous and mischievous talk. That must all be changed, "for, by the Life of God," he cried, "it doth even take my wits from me to think on it. The gentleman in the future must haul and draw with the mariner, and the mariner with the gentleman." Then with the utter unexpectedness that always characterized him, he made them all the most amazing offer.

If any section of his audience did not like the prospect, he would let them have the "Marygold" and get off home at once. But if they settled to do that, home they must go, "for if," he said, "I find them in my way I will surely sink them." His boldness was justified, for not a hand was raised in favour of this. More amazingly yet, for he was rightly determined to have the entire command on all points in his own hands, he turned to his ships' officers and told them that from that moment they were ordinary seamen. At this there were protests, and Drake reminded them that it was in his power to do exactly what he chose, and waited for any further rejoinder. None came, and for the present he left it at that. Then for a moment he reverted to the tragedy, and said that he knew there were others who deserved death, but that the affair was over. Finally, he appealed to their patriotism to make a success of the adventure on the threshold of which they now stood; failure would make them the

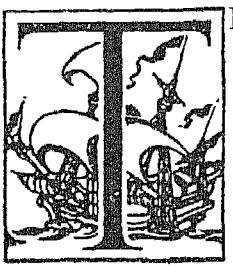
scorn of their enemies, and be a great blot to their country for ever; and since his authority was unchallenged, he reinstated all the officers whom he had just deposed.

That was all. He had dealt with every point in the situation, not with subtle cleverness, but with simple genius. With a clean slate, from which all the evil scribble of jealousies and mutinous talk had been erased, he turned with unabated confidence to the future. There faced him no menace so black with danger as that which now had been dispersed.



CHAPTER VIII

THE "GOLDEN HIND" IN THE PACIFIC



HE fleet weighed anchor on August 17th, 1578, and three days' sailing brought it to the opening of the Strait. Drake had with him a copy of Magellan's *Discovery*,[1] which no doubt was the English translation of Pigafetta's narrative by Richard Eden, published in 1555. Now, before entering the Strait he broke up the Portuguese prize, the "Mary," for she was leaky, and there was no place for the inefficient in the work that lay before him, and, as always, he rid himself of all that was more like to be a hindrance than a help. He also rechristened the "Pelican" with the immortal name of the "Golden Hind," the same being Christopher Hatton's crest, and on August 20th, 1578, she rounded the last cape, beyond which lay the ominous corridor that opened into the Pacific. The fleet thus consisted of but three vessels, the "Golden Hind," the "Elizabeth," and the "Marygold," and as they turned westwards under the curtain of cliffs that draped the entrance, there came from the flagship the order to strike the topsails in honour of the Queen's Majesty. Tortuous was the passage and the chart deceptive; often they had to tack out of land-locked inlets, or Drake scouted ahead in a small boat to find the way, and the winds were contrary,

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 303.

but the stimulus of unknown adventure had begun to ferment, and Drake's drum was beating. Like all great men, he had the power of stripping from him the irrevocable and tragic past, and from now till when the "Golden Hind" crept up Plymouth Sound on the tide of the Channel, his was the irresistible boyish spirit that revelled in hazards, and wasted no regrets on calamity. To the north there were to be seen the fires of native tribes, and they occasionally came across their canoes: there were, too, great numbers of penguins, "fowls that could not fly, of the bigness of geese." The crews slew and salted companies of these fearless inquisitive birds, who had no knowledge of man, and it says much for the new spirit of cheerfulness which Drake had created, that these were found to be excellent eating. The plains that here and there bordered the Strait were green and fruitful, then there rose towering cliffs again, and high above them soared the remoter summits and spires, where the "congealed clouds and frozen meteors" fed snowfield and glacier. The winding Strait took them west, then south, then west again, to the buffet of cold and shifting squalls, and after landing on one of the group of three islands in order to christen it by the name of the Queen, the fleet slid into the Southern Sea on September 6th, 1578. The ocean of Drake's dreams lay open before them, and there was plain sailing now to Peru and Panama.

But all the powers of the air seemed banded against him. Next day there arose an intolerable tempest from the north, and though at present the three ships kept in touch with each other they were whirled blindly southwards, and an eclipsed moon added terror to their helpless drifting before the gale into seas unknown. When at length, a fortnight later, the storm abated, Drake found that the "Marygold" had disappeared. The two remaining ships sought shelter and anchorage

near the mouth of the Strait, but once more, as they waited for a fair wind, a tempest of incredible violence descended on them, and the " Golden Hind " parted her cable, and beating out to sea for safety, lost sight of her only remaining companion. The " Elizabeth " regained the Strait, and there, after waiting three weeks, and seeing no sign of the " Golden Hind," Winter gave her up for lost, and, instead of trying to make the appointed rendezvous, deserted. He navigated the Strait eastwards, and, with Cooke on board, returned to England. There Cooke dictated to Stow the narrative which we have been largely following : its venomous and often false attacks on Drake were, no doubt, intended to discredit him in anticipation of his possible return, and prejudice his case if he proceeded against Winter and the crew of the " Elizabeth " for desertion.

Of the squadron which had left England last October the " Golden Hind " alone remained. She had reached the Pacific, on which, from the Pisgah-tree, Drake had prayed he might sail an English ship, but that calm and glittering vision came to fulfilment in week after week of unprecedented tempest. Yet this last storm, which seemed to have been the heaviest of all the misfortunes which had befallen him, was indeed the first of the prosperous gales which attended him henceforth. Its rage had driven him even further south than before, and, lo ! at the end of the islands below the Strait was no vast continent, as Magellan had supposed, that stretched continuous into polar ice, thus constituting his Strait the only southern corridor from Atlantic to Pacific, but a limitless open sea. The conjectured *Terra Australis* had no existence : there was ocean, not continent to the south of Cape Horn, and Drake saw how the " Atlantic and South Sea meet in a most large and free scope." On the southernmost of these islands, which Drake christened the " Elizabethides," he and Fletcher landed,

and Drake, "seeking out the most southernmost part of the island, cast himself down on the uttermost point grovelling, and reached out his body over it," [1] thereby becoming, in truly Drakian fashion, the most southerly of all living or dead explorers. Fletcher carried a bag of tools ashore, and set up a stone, on which he chiselled the Queen of England's name and the exact date.

The storm that had driven Drake so far south was the blind instrument of his discovery, for it had been no part of his design to verify the existence or the reverse of *Terra Australis*. Though it appears that he had doubts of the reality of this supposed continent, it was not with intention that he made one of the greatest geographical discoveries of all time. For practical value, with regard to all subsequent navigation, it was indeed by far the greatest of which we have record.

But his business was northwards; he had appointed a rendezvous with the two missing ships, which he still hoped to rejoin, on the coast of Chili, and on October 30th, 1578, he shaped his course there. The Spanish charts figured the land as trending strongly to the north-west of his present position, and he steered in accordance with them. But no Chilian coast came in view, and now, when by these inaccurate charts he should have been sailing far inland in Chili, he guessed that the Spaniards were as inefficient map-makers as they were in every other point on which he had tested them, and altered his course. Chaplain Fletcher ingeniously suggests that these charts were drawn wrong, for the confusion of alien voyagers. This cast eastwards brought them first to the island of Mucho, where they were attacked while watering by the natives, treacherously, according to one account, but, according to another, owing to some misunderstanding. Drake sustained two wounds, one in

[1] Hakluyt Society, *Observations of Sir Richard Hawkins*, p. 224.

his face and one in his head, and others of the company were severely injured. One surgeon of the fleet had died, the deserter Winter had the other on the "Elizabeth," all medical aid had to be given by a boy "whose goodwill was more remarkable than any skill he had," but all recovered. Drake took the view that his party had been mistaken for Spaniards, in which case the natives were highly to be commended for thus attacking them, and refused to allow reprisals.

They sighted the coast, but no "Marygold" met them, nor yet the "Elizabeth," for the one had foundered in the storm that had driven the "Golden Hind" southwards, and the "Elizabeth" was now safely back in the Atlantic, scudding home. But Drake had no more thoughts of going back than Winter had of going forward: he was at war with the King of Spain, and the "Golden Hind" was his navy, his diminished company his army, and the Pacific his chosen battlefield. Still scouting for the missing ships, they went northwards along the coast, and the fun began.

They fell in with a comely, harmless Indian a-fishing in his canoe. After some presents and politenesses, good relations were established, and from a friend of his who spoke Spanish, Drake learned that there were victuals and harbourage and something more worth having at Valparaiso, where, on December 5th, 1578, the Indian piloted them. There was indeed something worth having, for the "Grand Captain of the South," a richly laden Spanish ship, about to sail for Panama, lay at anchor. There were but eight Spaniards on board, who (no more suspecting that the modest little "Golden Hind" could be anything but a Spanish ship, than that the monster Drake, last seen six years ago in Spanish waters, was her captain) drummed them a welcome, and bade them come on board and drink a bottle of wine. Thomas Moone, with a party, put off in answer to this kind

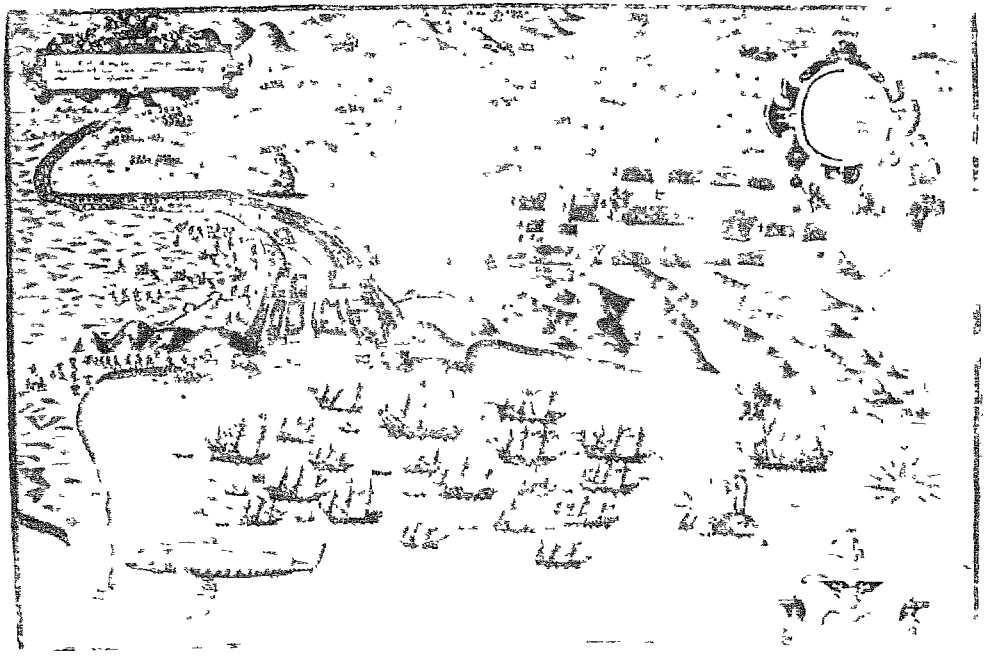
invitation, but the moment they were on board, Thomas very rudely began to lay about him, calling out, "Go down, dog!" One dog swam ashore, but the remainder were captured, and Drake landed at the small settlement on shore, and took it. In a chapel there, he found a chalice, two Communion cruets, and an altar-cloth, which he gave to Chaplain Fletcher for use on the "Golden Hind," and there were some cedar logs and a quantity of wine. Then he set the seven captured Spaniards on shore, and took the prize out to sea. Prize indeed it was, for there was gold to the value of over £8000, not to mention 1770 jars of wine, and a Greek pilot who would take them to Lima. And so the Spaniards knew that Drake was in the Pacific, and had paid a call.

This opulent interlude over, Drake once more set himself to look for his missing ships, and spent the remaining month of 1578 in searching the wooded inlets of the coast with his pinnaces. But all was fruitless, and now he turned northwards again, piratically raiding as he went in the best and most surprising style of the Nombre de Dios days. The burden of past dissensions and tragedy slipped from him: he revelled again in pilferings and great prizes and gay adventure. These piracies may not have been magnificent, but they were war, for they deprived the King of Spain of "the gold with which he troubled the world." They kept close in shore, so that "any person travelling on land could be distinctly seen from the ships," and thus it was that at Tarapacá they spied a Spaniard lying on the beach, fast asleep, with four thousand ducats' worth of silver by him, and these they took away so softly that they did not even wake him up: it must have been a most astonished Spaniard who marvelled at this nightmare conjuring-trick when his nap was over. Another day there was a lack of fresh fish, and as a boat, laden

with a nice catch, was conveniently near, Drake went shares with the owners in it : another day, again wanting fish, he found himself completely outwitted, for he took a laden fishing-boat in tow, but the perfidious occupants quietly undid the towing-rope during the night and sailed off, so there was no fish for dinner after all. It was pleasant after that to find a Spaniard driving eight llamas, each of which carried two leather bags containing fifty pounds' weight of silver. . . . There were heavy disappointments as well, for by now the news of Drake's amazing epiphany in the Pacific had preceded him, and after finding at Arica that a ship, richly metalled, had gone northwards, they pursued her, and after a long chase found her quietly lying at anchor. Very stealthily they boarded her, but the crew, already warned, had removed all the treasure and themselves. So Drake, betwixt rage and laughter, set her sails for her, and out she went to sea for ever and ever. But neither that nor the capture of some table linen next day can quite have consoled him.

These small affairs were but Drake's diversions, a mere culling of wayside flowers ; now the nosegays were abandoned for a more serious undertaking, which he conducted in his usual manner, making his plans completely depend on such circumstances as might develop, and wresting advantage out of chance and unforeseen difficulties with a quickness otherwise unknown outside the pages of incredible fiction. There are several accounts of this adventure, which supplement each other to make up an entrancing story.

He was approaching the port Callao de Lima, from which the golden argosies were wont to set sail for Panama. He had no idea whether he would find the harbour bristling with defensive guns, or whether the news of him had not yet arrived. It was wiser, therefore, to make a quiet and unobtrusive entry after sunset, on February 15th, 1579. Nothing more tranquil could



SAINT IVO

be imagined ; in the harbour, duskily visible, lay five Spanish ships waiting for their cargoes ; their crews were ashore, and Drake, finding his visit was unexpected, came right in among them, and quietly anchored. If any one noticed his entry, they mistook him for a Spanish craft. Then in the darkness he sent out a party to shear these dozing unshepherded lambs, but they found only one chest of bullion and some silks, which they put for safe keeping on the "Golden Hind." But Drake learned news that was richer than that chest of bullion, for a chance watchman, captured on one of these ships, told him that a great vessel, "Our Lady of the Conception," laden with gold, had sailed a fortnight ago for Panama.

No alarm had yet been given, for while these quiet investigations were going on, a Spanish ship from Panama swung into the harbour, and confidingly, but embarrassingly, took up her moorings close to Drake. But at this point the "Golden Hind" must have attracted attention from shore, for a boat put out and asked who she was. So Drake instantly whispered to his Spanish prisoner to sing out that she was a Chilian ship, and that her captain was Miguel Angelo, who was well known to be in the Spanish service. But unfortunately the enquirer swarmed up the ship's side to see his friend, Captain Miguel Angelo, and instead he found himself looking down the muzzle of a large gun. This was strange, for the treasure ships plying in the safe and unraided waters of the Pacific carried no big guns, and he dropped down into his boat again to tell the garrison on shore of this remarkable trader. The alarm was given, and the confiding ship from Panama slipped her anchor, and put out to sea, pursued by Drake's pinnaces. But he did not follow until he had cut the cables and masts of all those five tranquil Spanish ships that lay at anchor round him, so that they drifted together, and got

hopelessly muddled up, and could not pursue. Then out he went after his pinnaces, and captured the ship from Panama. He did not spend much time in searching her, for he must be off under full sail after "Our Lady of the Conception," if he was to catch her before she came to Panama: a fortnight was a long start, though doubtless she would put in at ports on the way.

Then came a delay which must have made Drake curse. For two whole days the wind entirely dropped, and there he stuck not far outside the port. Worse yet, the Viceroy of Peru, hearing of the raid, hurried soldiers down to Callao and embarked them. There came a slant of wind from landwards, and they could use that, while still the "Golden Hind" lay hopelessly becalmed: all that Drake could do while waiting for the wind to reach him was to get the crew he had put on to the prize into the pinnaces again. But at last the breeze set the "Golden Hind's" sails shivering; it grew rapidly to a strong wind, and he could laugh at his lumbering pursuers. Next day they took a frigate, but had no news of "Our Lady," and now Drake himself sailed in the pinnace which he kept close in shore in case of her having put in to water or provision, while the "Golden Hind" stood out to sea. Then they got news of the quarry: a ship which they boarded outside Paita reported that she was gone from there only two days before, and with a rattling gale to speed them, they overtook next day a Spaniard bound for Panama, from which they learned that "Our Lady" had passed him only twenty-four hours ago. This ship had more than news aboard, and she was lightened to the extent of eighty pounds' weight of gold and a crucifix set with large emeralds.[1] While dealing with it there occurred an incident which

[1] Hakluyt Society, vol. xi. p. 116. This was clearly "the great cross of gold set with emeralds, on which was nailed a god of the same metal," which the Authorized Narrative says was taken at Valparaiso.

has been grossly distorted to Drake's discredit. The Captain guaranteed that he had declared all his cargo, but a half-breed negro boy concealed on his person some small bars of gold which he had abstracted. They were discovered, and Drake is said to have "hanged" him.[1] But such a hanging does not mean execution at all: it was a mode of punishment, brutal, but not fatal, and here well deserved. The culprit was strung up and ducked in the sea: or, in another form, he had a rope put round his neck and was lifted off his feet. This is alluded to in the deposition of a pilot, Alonzo Sanchez Colchero, whom Drake also "hanged." Colchero says that he was twice hanged, but being then exhausted, was let go.[2] Drake only once, under extreme provocation, killed any prisoners,[3] and his detractors must reluctantly abandon this incident as a proof to the contrary.

So they were rapidly gaining on the great prize, and the "Golden Hind" crossed the line with a full gale behind her. There might be a fight before they took her, for "Our Lady of the Conception" had earned the less-exalted name of the "Cacafuego," or "Spitfire." But the "Golden Hind" had fire inside her too, and now all eyes were strained seawards, for Drake had promised a chain of gold to the man who first sighted her. At three in the afternoon, on March 1st, 1579, as they came opposite Cape San Francisco, young John Drake, the Admiral's page, sang out from the mast that the gold chain was his, for his young eyes had seen her at three leagues' distance.[4]

Thereupon Drake gave an order, the object of which is disputed. He trailed at the stern of the "Golden Hind" some wine casks, which Nuño da Silva says were filled with water, for the ship was "sailing heavy," and

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 306.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 196. [3] See p. 195.
[4] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 48.

this weight at the stern would cause her bows to rise, and she would sail more lightly. Others maintain that his object was to reduce his speed by these brakes, because he did not wish to attack till nightfall, and in the meantime the Spaniard would not see she was being pursued and overhauled. Shortening sail would seem to have been a simpler device, but no precaution of such sort was necessary, for the Captain of the "Cacafuego," Juan de Anton, strolling along to Panama, and not dreaming that any enemy could be in these waters, put about to join the vessel he had sighted, came alongside the "Golden Hind," and asked who she was. Drake instantly called on him to strike sail and surrender to the English, and on his refusal opened fire with guns and arrows. Her mizzen was sent overboard, and from the pinnaces the English swarmed up the ship's side. The crew fled below, Anton was taken prisoner, and the rude "Spitfire" surrendered without showing a touch of her quality.

For two nights and a day, with a prize crew on board his capture, Drake beat out to sea, and there, in the vast seclusion, explored the immensity of the treasure. Four days they lay there, transferring the cargo to the "Golden Hind," and this included thirteen chests of coined silver, and twenty-six tons of silver in bars, and eighty pounds of gold, and boxes of jewels and of pearls. There was on board an amusing pilot's boy, who, as the treasure was evacuated from the "Spitfire," said that she must now be known as the "Spit-silver," "which pretty speech of the pilot's boy ministered matter for laughter to us both then and long after." Meantime, Señor Juan de Anton was Drake's guest and sat at his table, and the Admiral treated him with the utmost courtesy and friendliness, showing him over his ship, and telling him frankly that he was getting back what the Spanish had stolen from him and Hawkins : he even

discussed his own future plans with him. And when the transhipping work was over, Drake carefully wrote and signed a formal receipt for the treasure he had taken on board.[1] It remained then only to part with his prisoner-guest, to whom he appears to have taken a real liking, and his last courtesy was to give him a letter of safe-conduct if he fell in with either of his missing ships. It was addressed to John Winter, Captain of the "Elizabeth," and ran as follows :

"Master Winter, if it pleaseth God you should chance to meet with this ship of Señor Juan de Anton, I pray you use him well according to my word and promise given them : and if you want anything that is in this ship of Señor Juan de Anton, I pray you pay them double the value of it, which I will satisfy again : and command your men not to do her any hurt : and what composition or agreement we have made, at my return to England I will by God's help perform, although I am in doubt that this letter will never come into your hands, notwithstanding I am the man I have promised to be. Beseeching God, the Saviour of all the world to have us in his keeping, to whom only I give all honour praise and glory. What I have written is not only to you M. Winter, but also to M. Thomas, M. Charles, M. Caube, and M. Anthony, with all our other good friends, whom I commit to the tuition of Him that with his blood redeemed us ; and am in good hope that we shall be in no more trouble, but that He will help us in adversity : desiring you, for the passion of Christ, if you fall into any danger, that you will not despair of God's mercy, for He will defend you and prevent you from all danger, and bring us to our desired haven, to whom be all honour glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

"Your Sorrowful Captain, whose heart is heavy for you,

"FRANCIS DRAKE." [2]

No one can doubt the sincerity of this letter, and it is a most important documentary portrait of Drake's

[1] Southey, *British Admirals*, vol. iii. p. 150.

[2] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. xi. p. 147.

mind. Piracy and the most fervent piety were not only compatible but identical, for the pirate who looted the King of Spain's treasure ships was a crusader under the direct protection of the Most High : Drake was doing His Will (as well as getting back what the perfidious nation owed him). Instructive, too, is his complete trust in Winter : the notion of his desertion clearly never entered Drake's head. This and the growing chronicle of his voyages are already filling in his self-portrait, and presently we shall have the sketch of an independent delineator to give the detail of material accessories, which will touch into vivid life the picture of the " Golden Hind " and its captain as the furrow of her keel lengthens. . . . For the moment then, having drawn this inmost sketch of himself (in which we at once recognize the man who received the Sacrament with Doughty, and dined cheerfully with him just before the execution), he salutes his new friend, Señor Juan de Anton, as he stands on the deck of his rifled " Spitfire," and the " Golden Hind " slides off into the sunset. That evening, with the viols playing, and young John Drake standing behind his chair, wearing the smart gold chain which his quick eyes won for him, Drake supped without his Spanish guest, a little relieved perhaps that he had not to talk Spanish any more, though he knew it well enough to need no interpreter.[1] The ship was quiet that night, for the thumping tread of sailors laden with silver was over, and when the table was cleared, no doubt Drake and young John sat down and drew pictures together, as their habit was in hours of leisure. Soon he sent the boy to his bunk, and sat down to think. . . .

The question was what to do next. It was more than two months since the " Elizabeth " and the " Marygold " had disappeared, and though he had just written to his

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 335.

good John Winter, Drake had given up the chance of finding them again by loitering here. Besides, it was impossible to loiter here, for with the return of Anton to Panama, every Spanish ship in the Pacific would be alert for his capture. Originally he had hoped to take Panama and to plant a settlement on coasts thus severed from Spain, but now with only one ship that was impossible, and it was part of Drake's most sane genius never to confound the impossible with the highly improbable. Into a highly improbable adventure he went tingling with enjoyment and resource, but to attempt to take Panama, already probably warned and armed, with the "Golden Hind," would have been the dream of a madman. Besides, "his voyage was made"; its object (apart from taking Panama) was to fill his vessels to their utmost capacity with Spanish treasure, and now the only ship remaining to him had her glut. There was no Plimsoll mark in those days (and if there had been, Drake would certainly have painted it out), but he knew the "Golden Hind" was gorged. He still regarded his plunder as the debt due to him for the treachery at San Juan d'Ulua, seven years ago, and had sent a message through Anton to that blackguard Viceroy of Mexico, Don Martino Enriquez, who was the author of it, telling him that he was still repaying himself. Now, when the least precious part of the "Golden Hind's" ballast was of silver, he made up his mind to go home. But by what route, south, west, or north?

The southward route through the Strait was the one by which he had come and by which he had meant to return, but with only one ship left, he would be running the gauntlet of the Spanish fleets of Chili and Peru, which, expecting him back, would by now be guarding the Strait. . . . Then there was a route westwards, across the Pacific, and by the Cape of Good Hope, thus circling the world. Probably that was the least hazardous, and

in itself a glorious feat, but hazards never seemed hindrances to Drake, and he considered yet a third route, one never yet traversed, and only theoretically possible, namely, north into Arctic seas and a navigation of the North-West Passage from the west, which Frobisher was attempting from the east. He had a map of it, which must have been Zeno's (published in the fourteenth century), and shortly before he put Nuño da Silva ashore, he showed him thereon "a strait situated at 66° N., saying that he had to go there, and that if he did not find an opening, he would have to go back to China."[1] He resolved to try that, but his mind was still wavering between that and the glorious circumnavigation, for he consulted the ship's company. There was the "Golden Hind" full of gold and silver, and so adventurous a voyage meant the gravest risks to the harvest of which they were part-owners. But his crew were with him, and without delay he set a northerly course towards the coast of Nicaragua, where they might clean ship and take in water and stores.[2]

On the way Drake captured a frigate carrying a novel and abominable cargo of sarsaparilla, which he brought along to a convenient creek behind the island of Cano. He transferred the treasure into the frigate, and mounted guns for its protection while the "Golden Hind" was cleaned and overhauled; and sorely she needed it. The dainty pinnace meantime cruised about and took another frigate which had come from China with Chinese pilots who knew the route. Though Drake had resolved to attempt the unexplored passage, he kept the pilots and their charts, as being likely to be of use, if the other route proved impracticable. Then, throwing the nasty sarsaparilla away, he reloaded, and in the last week of March set off again, intending to touch at Guatulco.

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 319.
[2] Southey, *British Admirals*, vol. iii. p. 152.

En route he captured a Spanish frigate, and though the booty of Chinese silks and porcelain (Ming) must have seemed paltry to him, he took it, because his wife needed it. That seems a poor reason, for he had not seen Mary for a year and a half; if she had wanted silk and china then, she would probably have got them by now. But this capture is of enormous interest to us, for we owe to it a unique picture of Drake and his life on the "Golden Hind." This frigate was taken without resistance just before dawn on April 4th, 1579, and its captain, Don Francisco Zarate, who recounted the whole incident in a letter to Drake's old enemy, Don Martino Enriquez, was brought on board the "Golden Hind." Drake, whom he describes as a short man with a fair beard, about thirty-five years of age, received him on deck. He put a few questions as to the cargo his prize carried, and—rather grimly—whether there were any relations of Don Martino Enriquez on board. When it was dinner-time, Zarate was bidden to seat himself next Drake, who told him to have no fear for his life or property, and to show no poisoning was intended, gave him viands from his own cover. As regards property, Zarate did not come off quite so well, for he records that Drake liked "certain trifles" of his, one of which was a gold falcon, "with a great emerald in the breast thereof." Drake gave him, in exchange, a dagger and a silver chafing-dish, so that, as Zarate drily remarks, he did not lose by the bargain. Nine or ten officers dined at the table, among whom was Nuño da Silva and John Doughty; the latter never left the ship, and seemed to Zarate, no doubt correctly, to be under surveillance. All manner of delicacies were served on silver plate parcel-gilt, and while they ate a string band played. There were scents, too, which Drake said the Queen had given him, rose-water, no doubt, for washing the hands after dinner. There comes in the "swan" of this

most human personage : he loved to tell Zarate that the greatest of all Queens had given him perfumes. Perhaps she had done so, but we must remember that he also told Nuño da Silva that the bronze cannon on his pinnace, which bore the maker's mark of the world with the sun above it and a star on top, signified the coat-of-arms that the Queen had also given him when she sent him to encompass the world. Drake was wrong about that : the Queen had never sent him to encompass the world, nor did she confer arms upon him till his return, and the arms she then gave him were not the device on the bronze cannon.

None of his officers, Zarate wrote, sat down or covered their heads in Drake's presence, unless bidden to do so, and even then they had to be bidden more than once. They formed his Council, whom he consulted on the most trivial matters, " though he takes advice from no one." The crew were extremely smart and well trained : Drake treated them with affection, though discipline was strict, and he punished the slightest fault : elsewhere we learn that gambling with cards or dice was forbidden.[1] Zarate enquired whether he was liked, and found that every one " adored " him. He carried carpenters and caulkers for repairs, and painters " who sketched all the coast in its proper colours." This troubled Zarate, for so true to nature were these sketches, that any who followed Drake could not possibly lose their way. On Sunday the " Golden Hind " was all decked out with flags and streamers, and Drake himself was dressed very fine. Zarate makes a big mistake about the tonnage of the ship, which he estimates at four hundred tons, instead of one hundred, but he was full of ungrudging admiration for it, and especially for Drake, whom he calls the greatest of mariners. Drake seemed to have talked freely to his guest, for he told him of his commission from the

[1] Hakluyt Society : Maynarde, *Sir Francis Drake : his Voyage*, p. 65.

Queen, of her half share in the proceeds of the voyage, and of the execution of Doughty.[1]

It is tempting to supplement Zarate's vivid little sketch of domestic life on the "Golden Hind" with that of the Factor of Guatulco, who shortly afterwards spent a compulsory day or two on the ship.[2] What chiefly impressed him was the quantity of prayers which were said. We know from the instructions Drake gave to the captains of his fleet in the expedition of 1595, that the first order was to hold service twice a day,[3] and the Factor of Guatulco tells us how Drake read prayers himself to his officers, Chaplain Fletcher ministering to the crew. Twice a day, before dinner and supper, a table was set for him, with a box and a cushion for him to kneel on; and when all was ready, he struck the table twice, and his nine officers, with small books in their hands, placed themselves round the table. Drake knelt and prayed for a quarter of an hour, and then turned to the Factor and other prisoners, and told them that if they liked to recite the psalms in his fashion they could stay, but if not they could go away, but must keep quiet. This lasted, so says the Factor, for about an hour (he was probably bored with keeping quiet), "and then they brought four viols and made lamentations and sang together" to their accompaniment. After that young John Drake was ordered to dance to them "in the English fashion," which the Factor took to be part of the service (like David dancing before the Ark), and then they had dinner. As well as reading the psalms, we learn that Drake preached.[4] . . . Between these accounts we can get a good picture of days on the "Golden Hind," when there was nothing doing, and of the relations between Drake

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, pp. 201-210.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 354.
[3] Hakluyt Society: Maynarde, *Sir Francis Drake: his Voyage*, p. 63.
[4] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 301.

and his men. But when there was work ahead, the pomp and the viols were put aside, and wherever danger was hottest, there was Drake.

So Zarate was sent back to his ship, and on April 15th Drake put into Guatulco, the last Spanish port at which he touched. The trial of some natives for conspiracy was going on, and Drake, in order to water and clean and victual in peace, surrounded the court, and put the whole lot of them, prisoners and police and judge alike, on board the "Golden Hind," while he stocked himself in tranquillity. The town was quite empty, but he pillaged the church, taking away vestments and vessels, and smashed the images to pieces [1]: thus we finally get rid of the foolish sentimental legend that Drake spared church property whenever he could. Here, too, he left Nuño da Silva, the Portuguese pilot, whose narratives and depositions have contributed so much to our knowledge of this voyage hitherto unknown, putting him on a ship bound for Panama. For that, too, Drake has been attacked, as having left him in a hostile country. But nothing can be more ill-founded: Spain and Portugal were allied countries, and Nuño da Silva, in his depositions, has not a word to say about any ill-treatment on this score. His depositions were merely informatory about Drake, not self-accusing confessions, for he had been carried off by force.

At this point, then, we must consider Drake's outward voyage over, as far as his intention went. It was "made"; he had passed the Strait of Magellan, and his one ship left was now laden with the spoils he had set out to take. England was his goal, by the shortest possible route, through the unexplored North-West Passage. The amazing feat he actually accomplished was still, in his mind, *à faute de mieux*.

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 352.

CHAPTER IX

COMPLETION OF THE VOYAGE OF CIRCUMNAVIGATION



RAKE, no doubt, was glad to leave Spanish seas (though, to be sure, all seas had been bestowed on Spain by His Holiness) and take his treasure out of range of pursuit. From April *16th till June* 3rd, 1579, he drifted and sailed west by north, and on June 5th was in latitude 42° N. Here they ran into weather piercingly and, for that time of the year, inexplicably cold : meat froze soon after it was taken from the roasting, the rigging was iron with ice, and great discouragement and misgiving took possession of all the company but Drake. Something was wrong, too, with the charts, for now, when they imagined that the American coast was far away to the east, a change of wind to the north-west brought them suddenly in sight of it. The land, in fact, did not trend away eastwards, but to the west. They struggled on, however, till, at latitude 48° N., opposite Vancouver, even Drake began to share the general misgivings. They had to anchor in an open bay, where the wind blew in dangerous gusts, with alternations of thick fog. It was impossible to wait in such an anchorage, impossible also, with a crew so disheartened and with useless charts, to proceed, and Drake turned and sailed south-east along the coast, arriving at latitude 38° N. in a sheltered bay,

now known as Drake's Bay, to the north of San Francisco.[1] As far as he knew, no European had ever been so far north along this coast before, though actually Rodriguez Cabrillo, a Portuguese, had touched here in a voyage of exploration in 1542. But to the best of Drake's knowledge, it was undiscovered land. Piercing cold still prevailed, though it is impossible to understand such weather here at midsummer, and the habits of the birds were equally unusual, for after the laying of its first egg, the parent never quitted the nest for a moment till the whole clutch was hatched.[2]

The "Golden Hind" was a-leak, and she must be lightened for repairs. But before landing, friendly overtures had to be opened with the natives, whose huts lined the shore. The natives took the lead, sending out a man in a canoe, who made a long oration with copious gestures: as it was completely unintelligible, the English found it tedious. But it was the preliminary to an exchange of presents, and an offering of a bunch of feathers, "very neatly and artificially gathered upon a string," was taken on board the "Golden Hind," and a hat duly bestowed in exchange: they would take nothing of all the enticing objects that Drake displayed but one hat. That was a good beginning, and Drake established himself on shore, making some sort of defensive palisade. As repairs went on, the tribe assembled in greater numbers, and all night women were heard shrieking: they beat their faces and bosoms, and dashed themselves on the ground. It began to be clear that the English were supposed to be gods, and these acts to be of a propitiatory nature.

[1] Mr. H. R. Wagner, *Sir Francis Drake's Voyage around the World*, pp. 156-8, puts forward the theory that Drake landed at Trinidad Bay, chiefly on the evidence of a map in the "Hondius" broadside. But he damages rather than supports his case by arguing that because Bruno Heceta in 1775 found natives there in possession of iron knives, these were given their forefathers by Drake two hundred years before.

[2] Hakluyt Society, *The World Encompassed*, pp. 113-17.

Drake, who was grievously shocked at such a notion, thereupon ordered his whole company to prayers, and they tried by genuflexions and gestures of supplication to convey the idea that they, too, were engaged in worship. This pious device was successful : the natives grasped the intention and, " greatly affected at what they witnessed," responded with loud " Ohs ! " at every pause : the singing of psalms particularly pleased them. Their confidence grew : they gave up these propitiatory mutilations, and after some days of cabalistic symbolism and worship on both sides, an embassy announced that the Hioh, or king of the tribe, was coming.[1] He wore a crown of knitted work ornamented with feathers, and before him went a mace-bearer and a large bodyguard. The mace-bearer made an oration that lasted half an hour, and when he had finished, everybody said " Amen," and then there were dances and songs, and when they were tired out, signs were made to Drake to sit down. Then there were more orations, which, had they been understood, were a supplication to Drake to become their king, for with more songs the king clapped the crown of feathers on his head, and encircled his neck with chains made of small polished bones, and loud shouts of " Hioh ! " went up. Thereupon Drake, " in the name and to the use of Her Most Excellent Majesty, took the sceptre, crown, and dignity of the said country into his hand," with all solemn formality. With his love of ceremony, he must, though slightly embarrassed by the feather crown, have enjoyed the proceedings quite enormously.

The tribe, however, still regarded them all as gods, for while the ceremony of coronation was going on, the

[1] Mr. Froude, *English Seamen*, p. 100, says that Drake found here " an Indian King who hated the Spaniards." Only one European had ever landed here before; that was nearly forty years ago, and he was a Portuguese. . . .

" common sort " circulated among the crew, " and such as pleased their fancies (which commonly were the youngest of us), they presently, enclosing them about, offered their sacrifices to them," with more of that tearing of their flesh as a sign of worship. John Drake was certainly among the youngest of the ship's company, and must have received a good deal of worship that afternoon, and it is permissible to imagine the young god standing as page behind the Admiral's chair at supper that night, with his gold chain about his neck, while his master had only the feathered crown and the chains of small bones. Perhaps when supper was over and the two were amusing themselves with their painting, they drew each other instead of the " birds and trees and sea-lions," which were their usual subjects.[1]

Thus Drake took possession of California in the name of the Queen, and called the country New Albion, to link it to England. The chief of the Californian Indians had undoubtedly ceded it to him, and in the absence of any evidence that Cabrillo had landed and annexed it, the title was probably a perfectly good one. That Drake himself considered it so, and believed that he had discovered and taken possession of the coast, there is no doubt, for before he left he set up a brass plate as monument of the Queen's and her successors' right and title to the same, on which was engraved Her Majesty's name, and the date of the year of the annexation. He made a cachet with Elizabeth's picture and arms, and a sixpenny piece with a hole in it, and his own name scratched on it. But it is to be feared that the title lapsed through desuetude, for it was many years before an Englishman again set foot on the shore of San Francisco, and in the interval it was peaceably annexed from inland. Indeed, the Queen herself, when told of her new province, was not very sanguine about her supremacy, for she asked

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 303.

what was the good of owning a place if you had no one there to hold it. So, when Drake left the coast, it was merged once more in the pool of annexable territory, and of Drake's title, valid in 1579, all that remains to us is the designation of New California in English atlases as New Albion, even as he then christened it.

Before the repairs to the "Golden Hind" were finished, midsummer had passed. Drake made excursions inland to explore the new English dominions, and the description of the conies that were found "with the tail of a rat of great length" possibly indicates that he was the first living European who saw a beaver.[1] Their skins were much prized, and the ex-Hioh wore a coat made of them. There were big deer also, and, with a sigh for the rich days of Spanish prizes, the chronicler records that there were indications of silver and gold everywhere in the soil. But while this pleasant interlude was playing, Drake must have made up his mind to abandon the easterly traverse of the North-West Passage, for when they set sail again his course was no longer northwards. The whole episode of the Californian adventure remains as a sort of pastoral played between two acts of serious drama. Though it was in a perfectly serious spirit that he annexed New Albion, the whole affair was a "lark" into which no one could have entered with gayer boyishness than he, and the spirit of fun, which inspired him to scratch his name on the toothpick for Ellis Hixom, was all alive when he received his feathery coronation, and again scratched his name on a sixpence.

For five weeks he had remained in the Bay, but now his drum beat again, and the "Golden Hind" pricked up her ears and sniffed the breeze. The superstitious awe

[1] The description does not wholly fit any known animal. Mr. Wagner, *Sir Francis Drake's Voyage around the World*, p. 146, says they must have been ground-squirrels.

of the natives had long given place to true friendliness and affection, and they brought their sick and those who had wounded themselves in the propitiatory rites to receive "lotions, plasters, and ointments according to the state of their griefs." The whole tribe abandoned itself to "sighs and sorrowings and lamentable mourning" when the departure was announced, and had to be comforted with the saying of prayers and psalms. As long as the ship was in sight they kept beacons blazing on the hills, and watched it till it disappeared.

It may be questioned whether Drake's idea of exploring the North-West Passage was ever a very serious one, for his usual determination to carry out anything on which he was really set, until the impossibility of it was demonstrated, seems to have been lacking. A few days of very bad weather, combined with the discovery that his charts were hopelessly inaccurate, had been sufficient to make him abandon it. Indeed, we may question if the weather was really as bad as the Authorized Narrative represents it, for such extremes of cold at midsummer off the coast of California are absolutely unprecedented, and may even be called incredible, and possibly an exaggerated account of these conditions cloaks a stubborn opposition on the part of the crew to proceed. The fact, too, that Drake had retained a Chinese pilot on board, who knew the navigation of the Pacific, shows that he at least provided for failure, and he may possibly have learned from the natives who traded northwards for skins that the coast (in spite of his charts) still trended far westwards, and that he would encounter cold infinitely more rigorous than he had yet experienced, and the perils of ice-sown waters, before he came near the passage he looked for. Now the course was set south by west, without any attempt to cast about northwards, till the "Golden Hind" was within 8° N. of the Equator. After leaving the American

coast she did not sight land again till the end of September, having been a full two months at sea.

The group of islands to which they came has been universally identified as the Pelew Islands. A quantity of highly decorated canoes, adorned with shells, put out to meet them, but when it came to trading for provisions, the natives proved less handsome than their crafts, for their way of doing business was to carry away the English goods, and return with showers of stones with which they pelted the crew, instead of the due equivalent of victuals. They had to be driven off with guns first fired over their heads and then at them. Magellan, in his voyage round the world, had experienced a similar reception at, probably, the same group. Since he had left it unchristened, Drake now called it the Isle of Thieves, and weighing anchor, he left these unprofitable swindlers behind. A fortnight's sailing brought him to the Philippines, and after passing various unidentified islands, they arrived, on November 3rd, 1579, off the Moluccas or Spice Islands.

He had intended to anchor at the island of Tidore, but he was met by an official canoe from the Sultan Baber, with the request that unless he was a friend of the Portuguese, he should instead put in at the island of Ternate, from which Baber had driven out the Portuguese some six years before in consequence of an atrocity they had committed in killing his father, cutting up his body, and throwing the shredded pieces into the sea. The Sultan had attacked and defeated them, but the natives of Tidore had rescued them, and they were on that island now. Drake had no liking for the Portuguese : indeed, there was no one he liked less, except the Spaniards, and since his only business was to provision, and, if possible, trade in spice, he accepted this invitation, and sent forward a velvet cloak for the Sultan, in token of friendship. There came back the present of a signet; Drake anchored

in a harbour recommended by the Sultan, and waited to receive the royal visitor.

Then indeed there was the pomp and finery in which Drake delighted when there was not sterner work in hand. Four great canoes made the circuit of the "Golden Hind," canopied with perfumed mats, and bearing the officers of state all dressed in white, and attended by divers comely young men and armed troops. The Sultan's canoe followed, and Drake's guns gave him a salute, and the ship's band played, which delighted His Majesty so much that he insisted on its coming aboard his canoe. They played to him for a good hour as he was towed along, and he said he was in "a musical paradise." He promised to pay another visit next day for some more music, and sent sago and rice and figs and olives to the ship that evening. But next day only his brother arrived, who invited Drake to visit the Sultan ashore. The crew and officers suspected treachery, and with the same devoted mutiny as they had shown at Nombre de Dios, refused to let him go. Instead, a party of officers were sent, and Drake must have regretted he had remained behind, for no treachery of any kind was intended, and the Sultan received them at a magnificent Durbar, in a skirt made of cloth of gold, and golden chains and head-dress, and sumptuous jewels on his fingers. He sat in his chair of state, and a page fanned him, and it was a pity that Drake and his page were not there. Then they came to business, and the Sultan, who seems to have been a really sagacious monarch, offered the English exclusive trading rights in spices, if they would frame a commercial treaty.

But Drake was not handling commerce: it was out of his line, and the "Golden Hind," big with treasure, was still far from home. No such treaty was executed (though it might easily have been of immense value), and the "Golden Hind" sniffed the wind again, and

trotted off to some small unidentified island probably (by their course) in the Bangaii Archipelago. They had been more than two months at sea, a long voyage was still in front, and here Drake cleaned ship, and gave his men a month's holiday, so that from being very weary fellows, they grew "to be strong, lusty, and healthful persons." Swarms of fireflies illuminated the night, and bats as big as hens and amazing cray-fish were the seamen's wonder. These cray-fish lived on land, and made burrows in the ground, and when pursued climbed trees, and each was a meal for four hungry men. No wonder that they called the place "Crab Island."

And now, when it seemed that all dangers were outrun, the "Golden Hind" encountered such peril as had never yet menaced her. Drake made his course to sail northwards of the Celebes, but winds drove him back south again, and he got entangled in uncharted leagues of reef-strewn waters. They sailed gingerly for some days, till they thought they were clear of these treacherous fangs, and, at last, running under full sail once more, the ship drove on to some outlying reef, struck twice, and was fast. This was at eight o'clock on the evening of January 9th, 1580, and all night they laboured to free her. Close round the reef was deep water, where no anchor to pull on could be cast, and the starboard wind served only to ground her more firmly. In the morning, as usual, Drake called all hands to prayers, and the Sacrament was administered by Chaplain Fletcher to the whole company. Trust in God must be endorsed by all possible human effort, and they threw overboard the cloves they had brought from the Spice Islands, three tons in weight, and eight guns, and a quantity of foodstuffs, but all seemed in vain. By the middle of the afternoon it was low tide, and there were but six feet of water to port of the "Golden Hind," which drew thirteen. But about four o'clock, the wind, which had been

holding her tight to her perilous position, suddenly veered; she heeled over towards deep water to starboard, and moved a little. Instantly they hoisted sail, and "the happy gale" slid her off the rocks. Amazingly, for all her twenty hours' impalement, which included two low tides, at any moment of which she might have split like a lath, the "Golden Hind," double-sheathed,[1] had received no serious damage.

There followed on the heels of this great deliverance an episode so astonishing that, though it must be narrated, it may easily seem incredible to any reader. Its sole source is in some contemporary memoranda which certainly concern this voyage, but by whom they were made, or for what purpose, it is impossible to say. . . . After the "Golden Hind" floated off into deep water, Drake ordered Chaplain Fletcher to be padlocked by the leg to the fore-hatches, and himself, sitting cross-legged on a sea-chest, with "a pair of pantoufles in his hand," summoned the whole ship's company together, and addressed the unfortunate clergyman in truly astounding terms.

"Francis Fletcher," he said, "I do here excommunicate thee out of the Church of God and from all benefits and graces thereof, and I denounce thee to the devil and all his angels." He further forbade him, on pain of death by hanging (real hanging), to appear on the fore-deck, and had a "posy" put round his arm bearing the uncompromising legend, "Francis Fletcher, the falsest knave that liveth." . . . And if he wanted to be hanged, let him take that off![2]

Now, such details as the pair of pantoufles in Drake's hand, and he cross-legged on the sea-chest, must give us pause before we reject the story: they have a strong air of actuality, as if recorded by an eye-witness. In

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 207.

[2] Hakluyt Society, *The World Encompassed*, p. 176.

these memoranda there is no mention of what Fletcher's offence was, but the editor of Drake's voyage of circumnavigation in Anderson's volume of *Captain Cook's Voyages* had certainly access to them, and perhaps to additional ones no longer extant, for not only does he describe the scene with the exact details given there, but tells us that while the "Golden Hind" was on the reef, Fletcher "exclaimed against the Captain as one whose crimes of murder and lust had brought down Divine vengeance on all the company."[1] The crime of murder no doubt refers to Drake's execution of Doughty, and that of lust to an otherwise uncorroborated story which he gives concerning a mulatto girl of fourteen, whom he took off Zarate's ship. Drake, "or other of his companions," he tells us, seduced her and abandoned her on "Crab Island," when she was about to bear a child.[2] But since there is no contemporary authority extant either for this story or for the reason of Fletcher's punishment, it is impossible to accept as authentic an account written two hundred years later, and the story of the seduction is utterly opposed to all we know of Drake.[3] Certainly, if Fletcher told the crew, while toiling desperately to save the ship, that the disaster was a divine judgment, no one ever better deserved abusive posies and excommunication, but we have no real reason to believe that he did. All the memoranda tell us is that Drake excommunicated Fletcher, but give no reason for it. Drake in a rage was probably appalling, and the wretched chaplain cannot have been amused, but to us the notion of an infuriated layman cross-legged on a sea-chest, with

[1] *Captain Cook's Voyages*, p. 394. [2] *Ibid*, p. 391.

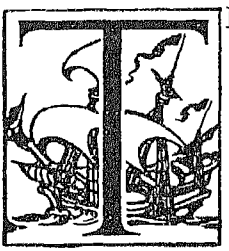
[3] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, pp. 31-32. John Drake, in his first declaration, says that there were two negroes and one negress on board the "Golden Hind" who were left at Crab Island, but he says nothing about any seduction, and no other authority mentions them at all.

a pair of slippers in his hand, fulminating his excommunication on an ordained minister, is a mere figure of fun.

There was still a month's beating about among dangerous shoals and insignificant islets before, on February 8th, 1580, the "Golden Hind" got into the open, arriving at Java in the middle of the month. Here they were hospitably entertained by the various Rajahs, and the Anonymous Narrative richly records that they had as many as four Rajahs visiting the ship simultaneously. Their departure was hastened by the news of the approach of some ships as big as the "Golden Hind," and of uncertain nationality, and as Drake no longer wished to meet any doubtful strangers, but only to get home safely, they said a hasty good-bye to the Rajahs and sailed at once, passing the Cape of Good Hope, "a most stately thing," without touching. Of the voyage after leaving Java there is almost nothing recorded, and we must assume it was eventless. They were very short of water before they got to Sierra Leone, where the famous oyster trees were still flourishing: indeed, so covered were they with spawning oysters that no vegetable bud could find room to grow. Then, putting out to sea for the last lap, they came, without sighting a single vessel, to Plymouth Sound. The exact date is uncertain and unimportant: the Authorized Narrative gives September 26th, John Drake the first week in October. To the mariners the day of the week after this westerly circuit was Monday, but on shore, as at Drake's return from the Spanish Main, it was Sunday. The "Golden Hind" was home again, and her keel had cut its furrow through the seas of the round world.

CHAPTER X

DRAKE ON SHORE (1580-1585)



THERE came fishing-boats about the "Golden Hind" as she slid up the Sound, and Drake, from the deck, asked if the Queen was alive and well. That was most important: he had foreseen how awkward it would be if, on his return, some monarch friendly to King Philip was on the throne. The Queen was in health, he was told, but there was pestilence in Plymouth. The "Golden Hind" notified her identity and dropped anchor, while one of the smacks made haste to sail into Plymouth Harbour. Her captain landed at the quay, and went hot-foot for the Mayor with the amazing news that he had spoken with Francis Drake, who had sailed into the golden West nearly three years ago, and was returned, all golden from the East. Twelve months and more had elapsed since John Winter, captain of the "Elizabeth," had come home, and he had been a nine days' wonder, for that he threaded forth and back the mythical Strait of Magellan, but all that he could tell about Drake was that he and the "Golden Hind" were last seen in the Pacific, and had disappeared, seemingly for ever, in such a tempest as no ship had yet survived.

The Mayor, we may guess, knew rather more than the fisherman who had brought him this stupendous news, for the agents of the Spanish Ambassador had been much interested, for many months past, in the shipping

that put into Plymouth, and Drake's history had been carried further than the hiatus at which John Winter had left it. For Drake had been a subject of vivid correspondence between the Foreign Office of His Most Sanctified Majesty of Spain and His Majesty's Ambassador to the heretic court of "that Jezebel of the North." Jezebel had received innumerable notes on the question, recounting how the corsair had been playing hell with the ships of the Most Sanctified in the Pacific, and loading his pirate craft with the gold that should have paid troops in the Netherlands and built ships at Cadiz. These (though the point was not explicitly stated) were certainly designed, when there were enough of them, to pitch Jezebel out of the window and buy dogs to eat her. His Majesty made strong complaints about this piracy: he thought it Too Bad, and did his Sister of England know anything about it?

Elizabeth had promptly replied that she knew nothing whatever about it. She was the last, the very last person to countenance such impudent attacks on her Brother's beautiful property. She was much shocked at the corsair's impudence, and (though this point was not stated at all) since Winter's return a year ago, she had been sorry she had given the corsair a thousand crowns of her own to be impudent with, for it looked as if it was lost, and she hated losing money. . . . At the same time she was not sure yet that it was lost, for in the interviews she had given her "little pirate" three years ago, he had struck her as a singularly efficient little pirate, who might turn up again. So, having represented herself to her Brother as a guileless lamb, bleating with injured innocence at the suspicion that she knew anything whatever about that horrid Drake, she began to consider what would happen if her little pirate was not at the bottom of the Pacific after all, and if not only her thousand crowns, but a gigantic dividend as well, were

still in existence. Drake appeared to have captured no end of her Brother's beautiful property, and, if still afloat, would bring it back to England one of these days. Ambassador Mendoza had told her that the booty he had captured was immense : her thousand crowns would have multiplied like stars on a summer night, and she writhed at the thought of having to restore all that to her Brother. And then there was her little pirate to think of : perhaps she would be requested to hang her little pirate. Plymouth would probably be his port, if he returned, and so she sent a private message to the good Mayor. To make sure, she sent similar instructions to her other ports as well.

So when the Mayor heard who waited on the deck of the barnacled ship which had come into port that Sunday morning, he lost no time, and presently he and a woman he had sent for were being rowed out to it. Up she went over the ship's side, and Mary Drake was in her husband's arms, and after that she went to look at the silks and china he had brought her, for he must have some serious conversation with the Mayor. When their talk was done, the Mayor went ashore again with certain letters that Drake had written. These were given to a messenger, who set off with all speed to London. The letter he must deliver first was addressed to the Queen's Majesty, and there were others for certain officers of State : Walsingham and Hatton, who had favoured the voyage, each received one, and we may be sure that Drake told Hatton that the sole remaining ship of the squadron, now heavy with gold and silver, bore the name of the " Golden Hind," which was his crest. But there was no letter for Burleigh.

The treasure was at once conveyed into Plymouth Castle, pending the result of Drake's letter to the Queen. The first news from London was not encouraging : he was informed by friends to whom he had written, that

he was in Elizabeth's bad books, for she had already heard, by way of Peru and Spain, of the robberies he had committed, and Mendoza was making a claim on the treasure. But at present there was no direct answer from the Queen, and this discouraging news was clearly her official attitude to the Ambassador, while she was considering what to do. The fact that she had a thousand crowns (plus dividends) at stake must have been consoling to Drake. It was a difficult situation for Elizabeth, and while she was considering, the most fortunate coincidence occurred, for she learned that Philip had landed troops in Ireland.

At once she saw her way out, and refusing to see the Ambassador while a single soldier was on Irish soil, she said there was no proof that Drake had robbed the King of Spain, and the matter must be carefully gone into. She sent for Drake, saying that he had nothing to fear, and bidding him bring "some samples of his labours." Drake understood that, as clearly as if she had winked at him, rushed to Plymouth Castle with the Queen's command, and loaded up such a treasure train as had never passed between Panama and Nombre de Dios. The Queen, as he had told Zarate,[1] was half owner of the proceeds of the voyage, and so, in full confidence that all was well, he took to London half the dazzling ballast of the "Golden Hind."[2] That, so he correctly guessed, was the meaning of "some sample of his labours." If we may take Purchas's estimate of the total value of the cargo as £326,580, Elizabeth's moiety would be worth about £1,125,000 of our money.[3] The Queen's share

[1] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. 208.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[3] The Spanish estimate of the value of the booty from the "Cacafuego" alone was 363,333 pesos. Sir Julian Corbett (*Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 431) makes the oddest error over the English money equivalent of this, for after telling us that the peso was worth 6s. 8d., he

may have been liberally computed, but as the rest of the shareholders got 4700 per cent. on their capital,[1] no one grumbled.

The treasure came, Elizabeth saw, and Drake conquered. There was still a section of the Council, notably Burleigh, and Sir James Crofts, the Controller of the Household, who was frankly in Spanish pay, who were for giving back to the King all that Drake had taken. They denounced him as an unscrupulous thief, and Drake's simple idea of bribing Burleigh with a handsome present did not meet with success. But the Queen was openly for him (and for her dividends), and by now the tale of his exploits was abroad, and once more the whole nation were dancing and laughing for sheer exhilaration at the man. That enormous national popularity made him as safe against any judicial steps as Elizabeth herself: the rhythm of Drake's drum was irresistible. Not yet did the Queen openly recognize the glory of his adventure, but sent him back to Plymouth to register the treasure still there, with permission to abstract £10,000 for himself and a suitable bonus for his crew before the registration began. The whole registration, indeed, was merely a bluff to satisfy Mendoza that she was going into the matter in a thoroughly business-like manner, which, in a sense, was perfectly true, for no one could be more business-like.

Into all the plots and counter-plots of policy which followed, it would be tedious and irrelevant to enter. There was a set of wheels and another of wheels within wheels which ticked out the growing conviction that Spain was the deadliest of England's enemies, and an antiphonal mechanism, of which the mainspring was the hope of an alliance with Spain, and Elizabeth some-

makes the value of the "Cacafuego" to be £1,090,000. Apparently he multiplied by three instead of dividing.

[1] Wagner, *Sir Francis Drake's Voyage*, p. 506.

times wound up the first machine and sometimes the second. Drake brought the sea-weary little "Golden Hind" to Deptford, and all London went crazy with enthusiasm, to the horror of his detractors there, and he was mobbed by his admirers when he walked along the streets, and the chroniclers and ballad-makers were busy with his name.[1] The Queen, while still diplomatically shocked with him, saw him in private audience in her cabinet; she walked with him in her gardens, and graciously accepted some nice presents from him—a fine emerald crown, in which were three stones as long almost as a man's finger, and a diamond cross.[2] He gave her also something which now would be more priceless yet, namely, his diary of the voyage copiously illustrated by him and his young cousin, whom he presented to the Queen. What has happened to this is not known: no trace of it remains. But in 1585 Henri of Navarre wrote to Walsingham, asking if the Queen would command the "Chevalier de Drac" to send him the "discourses of the great voyage,"[3] and perhaps the imprudent woman lent him this book. In return, she gave Drake the Manor of Sherford, and some gold cups and vessels. The Church, too, looked kindly on the pirate, and Drake gave the Archbishop of Canterbury, "his friend," a map of the voyage richly decorated with coloured and gilded designs,[4] which his friend seems to have lost, for it is no longer in the library at Lambeth Palace. On the other hand, in commercial circles which traded with Spain and saw that if such expeditions were encouraged the credit of Spanish merchants would be seriously impaired, there was strong feeling against him, and this animosity, fostered by Mendoza, solidified into

[1] Stow, *Annals*, p. 808.
[2] Letter of Mendoza to King of Spain.
[3] Hakluyt Society, *New Light on Drake*, p. xlv.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. xxvii.

a series of accusations against him of cruelty to prisoners and barbarous punishments. No definite charge was made, but tongues were busy. Drake courted enquiry, and his crew, *en masse*, deposed on oath that there was no shred of truth in these scandals, and this set the matter at rest.

Possibly this enquiry had something to do with Elizabeth's belated recognition of his achievement: she may have waited till he was cleared, or perhaps she was only being diplomatic, but on April 4th, 1581, she decided to persevere no longer in this correctness which deceived nobody, and went in state to visit her little pirate on the "Golden Hind" at Deptford. She was served with such a banquet as had never been seen since the days of her father's magnificence, and when dinner was done, in open defiance of the King of Spain, who had demanded Drake's head, she bade the culprit kneel before her, "for now she had a golden sword to strike it off," and at her bidding there was knighted, as Mendoza acidly remarks, "the master-thief of the unknown world." Arms, too, she gave the thief, with a crest that commemorated his exploit, and the ship that had carried him was installed in a shed at Deptford, where, dry-shod, she should be a standing memorial of that long furrow. The scholars of Westminster were permitted to inscribe a tablet to be affixed to her mast, and perpetrated some remarkably poor Latin Elegiacs.

But of far more interest, even to pomp-loving Drake, must have been the private talks he had with the Queen, in which, with no Burleigh by, he could unfold his policy to the enchanted Gloriana, whom he had so bountifully enriched. Spain was the arch-enemy, and the right way to cripple her and loosen her hold on the seas was to strike at her trade, to capture her treasure ships, and so put her into bankruptcy. Twice already had Drake demonstrated the process, and the terror which he and

his unexpected exploits had inspired showed that Spain fully appreciated the danger. Those raids must be repeated again and again on a larger scale, with bigger squadrons. A base, too, difficult of capture, an eyrie from which the sea-eagles could pounce on the slow golden carp that swam from the Indies to Cadiz, must be established.

The plan began to weave itself, and by the day Drake received his knighthood it had shape and outline. An integral part of it was an alliance with France, and that promised well, for the Duke d'Alençon, brother of the King of France, was here, and his marriage with Elizabeth, in spite of the ludicrous disparity of age, seemed likely: it was even stated that Calais and Boulogne were to be returned to the English crown.[1] The idea of the marriage, it is true, was very unpopular in England, and it may be questioned whether the Queen ever seriously intended it. What she did intend was to procure an alliance with France, for France was to help in this new scheme of Drake's against Spanish trade-routes, and Alençon was perhaps only a pawn in the game, to be sacrificed when the Queen had moved. During this autumn of 1581 Drake was in high favour: he appeared at tourneys by the Queen's side: he was constantly in company and conversation with her, and supped with Lord Sussex and Lord Arundel, to whom he said that he was quite capable of making war on the King of Spain, which seemed to their Lordships a great piece of impudence.

The project in which France was to assist was the establishment of an eyrie at Terceira in the Azores, from which to swoop on Spanish treasure ships. On the death of Cardinal Henry, King of Portugal, in 1580, Philip had grabbed that country, basing his claim on his marriage to the daughter of John III, and it was now

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 66.

in Spanish hands. Don Antonio, Prior of Ocrato, and natural son of Don Luis,[1] was a claimant, but after a short campaign he had to fly. After hiding for a time in disguise, he had escaped on a Venetian ship [2] and had got to England, followed by loyal aristocrats from Portugal,[3] bringing money and jewels. The Queen received him with high favour (as another pawn), for, though he was an exile from his own country, the Azores were faithful to him, and the strong English squadron which was to be sent there would take possession in his name and, hoisting his flag, operate against Spanish treasure ships. Drake was to be in command of the fleet, and he, Hawkins, and Walsingham were to be the principal shareholders.[4] But the Queen still insisted that France should join in the enterprise, and France would give no promise. Then more money was wanted, and the Queen refused to advance it. So also did Drake and Hawkins, and after innumerable complications and still-born amendments, the whole scheme, magnificent as Drake first conceived it, crumbled away to nothing. The Queen's insistence on France's co-operation, which was quite unnecessary, ruined it. She had a great idea of her diplomatic gifts, and her repeated failures never taught her anything.

Drake must have been bitterly disappointed. He had no taste for international squabbles and bargainings: all he wanted was to get to sea and have business with the Majestic Beard again. So for the present he went back to Plymouth for a spell of domestic life with the shadowy Mary and her Chinese porcelain. He was elected Mayor in 1581, and during his term of office

[1] His parentage is uncertain: he was also said to be the son of a Lisbon merchant. (Monson, *Naval Tracts*, vol. i. p. 187, note.)

[2] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 50.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[4] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 347.

passed a rather characteristic regulation that the Corporation should wear red gowns : he also set up a great compass on the Hoe. For this year and the next he lived at Plymouth, waiting for the moment when he should be allowed to resume on a bigger scale such raids on Spanish commerce as Elizabeth and Walsingham approved in idea. He hated inactivity, and only one incident, and that fogged with mystery, interrupted the tedious round of civic duties. But since that concerned the execution of Thomas Doughty, and Sir Julian Corbett has propounded a remarkable theory about it, it must be shortly gone into.[1]

Sir Julian founds his theory on a passage from a speech of Sir Edward Coke's in the debate in the House of Commons in 1628 on Martial Law :

"Drake slew Doughty beyond sea. Doughty's brother desired an appeal (*i.e.* a prosecution for murder to be tried by battle) in the Constable's and Marshal's Court. Resolved by Wray and the other judges that he may sue there."

Now this prosecution of Drake never took place, and Sir Julian's theory is that the trial must have been stopped by some very powerful influence, namely that of Burleigh, whom, as we have seen, he regards as the sinister first cause of Doughty's mutinous attempts. On the sole evidence that this trial never came on, he wishes us to believe that Burleigh stopped it because he had induced Doughty to stir up mutiny among the crews of the expedition of which he disapproved, and try to wreck it. This would come out if Drake was put on trial, and Burleigh would be ruined.

Now there are invincible objections to such a theory. In the first place, if Burleigh had sufficient influence to stop a trial after the Lord Chief Justice had sanctioned it, it would surely have been easier for him to have

[1] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. i. p. 341, etc.

arranged that it should not be sanctioned. A more serious objection, already dealt with,[1] is that from all we know of Burleigh's character, it is inconceivable that he ever was an accomplice in Doughty's behaviour, or commissioned him to stir up mutiny. A third objection is, that even if he had done so, nobody knew about it except Doughty, and Doughty was dead. It never came out at the trial, or all the jury, forty in number, would have known about it, and the fact would have been public property long ago.

If, then, we reject so impossible a theory to account for John Doughty not prosecuting Drake, as he was legally entitled to do, for murder, we ought to find another more tenable, and Sir Julian, quite unwittingly, gives us the real reason for it, with his usual admirable detail. For shortly after John Doughty had obtained the legal decision that his action would lie, he wrote slanderous letters about Drake, saying that the Queen had knighted "the arrantest knave, the vilest villain, the cruellest murderer that was ever born." He was also implicated in some mysterious and bombastic plot for the assassination of Drake: the King of Spain was said to have offered 20,000 ducats to any one who would kill or kidnap Drake, and Doughty had certainly been approached on the subject. He was therefore clapped into the Marshalsea prison, and trial of Drake could not possibly proceed for the very simple reason that the prosecutor was not at liberty. He appealed to be released and tried, and in the fact that this was not done, Sir Julian again asks us to see the sinister influence of Burleigh. But if Burleigh had wished to silence John Doughty for ever (as by hypothesis he did), the simplest way of doing it was to have used the influence that was apparently so supreme in the much easier task of getting him brought to trial, for he would assuredly have been hanged.

[1] See p. 136.

In 1583 there came about an event that must be considered as inaugurating a new era not alone in the life of Drake, but in the evolution of the British Navy. His voyage of circumnavigation had already been honoured by the Queen with knighthood, but now his policy received its official accolade. A royal commission was appointed to enquire into a report on the state of the Navy, and the Commission, then as now, were highly placed personages who knew nothing about the subject, and so they naturally appointed sub-commissioners who did know about it. From the fact that Drake, Frobisher, and Walter Raleigh were among these, we can gather that the new school of sailors, who regarded the Navy not as subsidiary to the Army, but as the main national weapon in offence no less than defence, had won the day, and that Burleigh's policy, which had always been that the Navy was coastguard and conveyer of soldiers to desired points, had been definitely scrapped. The policy of Drake's voyages, the point of what his detractors called piracies, was recognized as the dawn of the new idea about the Navy.

The excuse for this commission was the investigation of certain contracts with regard to shipbuilding which had been carried out in an unsatisfactory, and possibly fraudulent manner, but the reason for it was that the Queen and her Council had at last recognized the fact that before long war with Spain was inevitable, and that sea-power alone, used not merely for coast defence and military ferrying, but for attack, could save England.

Offensive operations by sea, in raids and piracies, had always been Drake's method of carrying on his own private war with King Philip, and now at last, when national war was seen to be some time inevitable, his policy received national recognition in his appointment to the board of sub-commissioners. Never would he have been appointed unless he was meant to make himself

felt, and he might be safely trusted to do that. His record showed that whatever stood in his way, wind or witchcraft or incalculable odds, was scattered like chaff before his violence and will. If he had not been intended to exercise those now, he would certainly have been left to put on his red gown at Plymouth. It had a black mourning band round the arm, for shadowy Mary had died this year, and he was a childless widower. He had taken his seat in Parliament as member for Bossiney in Cornwall, but these two years, 1583 and 1584, he chiefly spent in visiting dockyards and making himself increasingly felt on the Naval Commission. There his only object was to get the Navy put into such a condition that it could at any moment send to sea a powerful and efficient force for offence, instead of merely guarding ports and conveying troops.

There were, during these years, innumerable rumours of war and innumerable wavings of olive branches: Elizabeth had a cutlass in one hand, an olive branch in the other, and she waved them alternately. Philip was arming too, for the English naval preparations, as reported by his agents in London, had alarmed him, and the two countries, England under the spur of the Naval Commission, and Spain under the representations of the Captain-General, Santa Cruz, were feverishly employed in building ships, for Spain was quite as firm a believer in Drake as Drake himself. But Elizabeth was still frightened of Philip, and Philip of Elizabeth, and, in a word, they continued gabbling about peace to each other, while the war party behind each urged them to fisticuffs. Once, during 1583, war seemed imminent, for the French plot to invade England, with the approval, if not the alliance of Spain, came to light, but its discovery was its undoing, since unexpectedness could alone have ensured success. Tension more than once seemed at breaking-point, and the international barometer jerked

up and down, as in highly unsettled weather, but the storm never burst, because neither Spain nor England were quite ready. During 1584, however, plans were laid for a big offensive expedition by sea, of which Drake was to be Admiral, Frobisher vice-Admiral, and the command of the troops accompanying it to be given to Captain Carleill, Walsingham's son-in-law.

By the end of this year, if Elizabeth had just clapped her hands, the expedition could have started. Drake's policy had won the day, for even Burleigh was now converted to it, and its object was exactly the same as had always been his, namely, to strike at the trade routes of Spain, to take the treasure ships which were her sinews of war, and to capture the stations of her Western Empire. But now this was no raid of a private pirate whom Elizabeth might disown even though her pockets dripped with the gold of her dividends; the raid was publicly approved by her Council and herself; the English Government was the pirate, and diplomatic denials for the future would be waste of breath.

It was exactly this finality which caused Elizabeth to hesitate before she clapped her hands, for the curtain would rise not on a romping and glorious farce, as Drake's previous expedition to the Indies had been, but on an act of serious international drama. She might still hope that Brother Philip would not consider the expedition an irrevocable reason for war, since he had stood a good deal of beard-singeing without biting, but she could not make up her mind to risk it. At one moment she was all majesty and uncalculating fury, the next she was a whimpering creep-mouse; never had she been more feebly vacillating. Physically and for herself she had a notable pluck: her life was in constant danger from Catholic and Jesuit plots, but she snapped her fingers at the notion of personal peril, and proceeded to the next business with an unconcerned shrug. But when it was

a question of national policy, she had to be cornered without escape before her courage could be aroused ; as long as two courses were open, she would always choose the less hazardous.

While Elizabeth still remained irresolute, Drake had gone a-courting, and early in 1585 he married Elizabeth Sydenham, daughter and heiress of Sir George Sydenham of Combe Sydenham, in Devonshire. We know almost as little of her as of his first wife, and for the present she saw but little of him, for in May King Philip, acting on the most Christian pronouncement of the Pope that no faith or bond of honour need be kept with heretics, committed, under Apostolic sanction, one of the rankest pieces of treachery that it is possible to imagine. Harvests had failed in Galicia, starvation threatened the provinces, and, under a promise of safe-conduct, he had induced a fleet of corn ships from England to bring grain into Corunna and Bilbao. They had hardly begun to unload when he sent down an order that all the English vessels should be seized and the crews thrown into prison; and of the whole fleet only one escaped, namely, the " Primrose," which was in the harbour at Bilbao. The Corregidor of Biscay, with the King's order in his pocket, had come on board with six men, in the guise of friendly merchants, and after ascertaining the number of the crew, which was only fifteen, had returned to the shore, leaving three of his men on the " Primrose." He came back again on a pinnace, bringing twenty-four armed soldiers, and summoned the crew to surrender, for they were the King of Spain's prisoners. But this was not quite the case, for the sailors of the " Primrose " went for them with extreme vigour and drove some back to their boats, and pitched others overboard, and cleared the ship of them. Among those who had been put overboard was the Corregidor himself, who was subsequently pulled out of the water by the English, and in

his pocket was found the King of Spain's order. The "Primrose" brought him and this highly incriminating document to London.

At that Elizabeth boiled over: Drake was bidden to get ready to go to sea, with the ostensible object of enquiring into this seizure of English ships. London and other ports sent their quota, and the fleet gathered at Plymouth. All speed was made, for fear the Queen might cool down again, and by the first week in September the fleet was expecting to weigh anchor in a day or two. Then a totally unexpected event occurred, which, though it might have been serious, had its comic side. Sir Philip Sidney suddenly came on board the flagship, and said that he was joining the troop of gentlemen adventurers.

Now there was no one whom Drake would less willingly have had on board (not even Gloriana herself) than this charming and courtly man, who was under the singular delusion that he was a leader of men, and would, no doubt, have tried to prove his quality. But to refuse point-blank to receive the favourite not only of Elizabeth but of all the Court, was almost as impossible as to do so. In this difficulty Drake had one of the brightest ideas that ever entered that most fertile brain: it occurred to him that possibly Gloriana's darling had run away from Gloriana. If that was the case, and he took Sir Philip with him, the Queen was perfectly capable of sending a swift pinnace after the fleet, and ordering it all back. . . . So he scribbled a despatch to some friend in London, bidding him instantly let the Queen know where Sidney was, and smuggled this off, while he ordered a banquet of welcome for the great man.

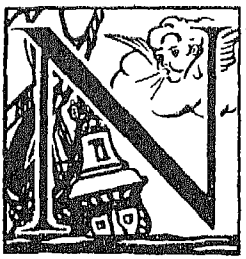
The reply came back without any of that hesitancy with which Elizabeth often drove her captains crazy: in fact, three replies came back. One was to Drake, a peremptory prohibition to take Sidney on board; the

second was to Sidney to tell him to come back, At Once; the third was to the Mayor of Plymouth, commanding him to see that these orders were obeyed. Drake's brilliant guess was quite correct: Sidney had run away from his doting mistress, and her property was to be forthwith returned. This was done, but the episode had thoroughly alarmed Drake. He felt he would never be secure till he had put leagues of blue water between himself and the Royal weathercock, and precipitately he bundled all his remaining stores on board, to sort them out afterwards, and on September 14th, 1585, he weighed anchor. For five years he had been tied up on shore: now his string was cut, and he splashed into the sea again.



CHAPTER XI[1]

A VOYAGE TO THE INDIES, 1585



EVER had such a lusty lot of pirates —for pirates in effect they were— set sail together. Elizabeth frankly godmothered them, for there were two Navy ships, the "Elizabeth Bonaventure" of 600 tons, and the "Aid." The rest were subscribed for by private shareholders, and numbered nineteen, exclusive of pinnaces. Among these was the "Primrose," which had escaped from Bilbao, on which sailed Drake's vice-Admiral, Frobisher: the galleon "Leicester," of 400 tons, came next in size to the "Elizabeth." But because the fleet was so large and powerful that it could not easily be put in a tight place by the Spanish, the voyage, though highly significant, lacks the thrill of Drake's earlier ventures, when tight places were his normal environment. He had less opportunity, too, just because he was now conducting a national enterprise sanctioned by the Queen, for those swift and dazzling decisions which so often before had pulled success out of almost certain disaster. We follow him with more seriousness, but less excitement.

Yet the first incident was Drakian enough. He was short of water, for he had left Plymouth almost in a panic, and now, instead of putting into Falmouth for it,

[1] The main records of this voyage are those of Captain Walter Biggs, Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. x. p. 97; and *The Log of the Primrose* (author unknown), Naval Records Society, vol. xi. p. 1.

which was the natural thing to do, he thought it would be more amusing to water at a Spanish port. So he sailed direct to Cape Finisterre, anchored among the Bayona Isles, and sent Captain Sampson (Corporal of the Field) with pinnaces strongly manned and armed to enquire of the Governor of Bayona, rather in the manner of Jehu, if it was peace or war, and why the English corn-ships had been seized. The Governor was a little shy of saying it was war, with a strong English fleet off the coast and English soldiers already landed, so he said it was peace. That was satisfactory; Drake asked for provisions and water, and also learned that the detained English corn-ships had been set free. What further humorous developments there might have been is uncertain, but bad weather was coming up, and he had to get his men aboard without watering. They rode out a three-days' gale, and when that was passed, Drake ruffled across to Vigo, and took some rather valuable loot (as it was peace) on his way.

He had now actually performed the ostensible object of his voyage, which was to enquire into the seizure of those English corn-ships, but he put into Vigo for the water he had not yet obtained, and the capture of more loot. He had a parley with a nervous Governor, after a demonstration in force, and put to sea again, well supplied by the Spanish with all he wanted for attaining the real object of his voyage, which was to do the utmost possible damage to the King of Spain's new Empire. He had also, with the impudent contempt which he always both felt and showed for Spain, let King Philip know that he was "mightily at sea again." That was pleasantly accomplished, and he left behind an agitated committee of Spanish state officials, all guessing what he was intending to do next. Admiral Santa Cruz rightly guessed that he was off to America, but thought he would make for the coast of Brazil, anticipating perhaps another raid into the

Pacific; and King Philip, with a dilatoriness that rivalled Elizabeth's, told him that when they were all agreed as to where Drake had gone, a strong squadron must certainly pursue him. This was done about the middle of the coming spring, when Drake had quite finished and was on his way home.

The fleet's first point of call was the Canaries, and on the way it talked with a French pirate who had news that must have made Drake gnash his teeth. Off Cape St. Vincent he had missed by a few hours only a Spanish fleet from the Indies. This seems to have been the last to sail that year (for in winter the track across the Isthmus of Panama became impassable), and Drake, though following the trade route, never set eyes on a single treasure-ship. At Las Palmas they hoped to furnish their stores with "such good things as it offered very abundantly," but Las Palmas was ready for them and only afforded them "many of their cannon-shot": the sea also was so rough that no landing could be made and they went on to the Cape Verde Islands. There Drake must have joined in a laugh against himself, for he made very careful preparations to take the fortress of Santiago. Carleill landed with a thousand men, and after prudently delaying the attack on this strong place till daybreak, advanced to the assault, but found not a soul there, as news of the expedition had reached the island and the town had been abandoned. Less humorously, there was no treasure there either, and all they could do was to hoist the royal ensign and fire off all the guns of the town in honour of the date, November 17th, which was the anniversary of the Queen's accession.

A Portuguese ship came in under a flag of truce to ask who they were, and Drake sent a message to the Governor that if he was wise, he would come and parley: failing that, every town on the island should be burned to the ground. No Governor appeared, but there was

news that he and other important folk had gone to San Domingo, some twelve miles inland. Drake sent a contingent of six hundred men there, but they found it deserted also, and burned it. Then from a prisoner came information that there was treasure hid at Porto Praya, but the search was in vain, and so Porto Praya was burned. Returning to re-embark at Santiago, he burned it as well and set sail to the west, leaving the three towns of the island in smoking ruin, but without having enriched the expedition by a single ducat.

Shortly after leaving Santiago Drake seems to have sketched out his proposed campaign in the Indies to some one on the expedition with him, for there exists a most interesting document[1] recording the incidents of the voyage up till then, and giving "by conjecture," with dates, his future movements. His plan was to sail to the island of Domenica, arriving on November 28th, and after watering there, to take the town of Margarita. From there he meant to cross to the Main, and by December 6th to have sacked Rio de la Hacha with a prospect of great spoil. An alternative plan (which he subsequently adopted) was to take Domingo first, and after that proceed to Rio de la Hacha. Santa Marta was to be taken next, and then Cartagena, which would occupy him till January 8th, 1586. After that he proposed to take Nombre de Dios, collect friendly Cimaroons and go up the River Chagres and attack and take Panama, thus severing from Spain all the fabulous wealth of Peru. While these land operations, which should be complete by February 25th, were going on, he would himself cruise up the coast of Honduras, to victual and to capture all the frigates on the coast, numbering 200. He would also "prey upon many rich men" and enrich himself with ransoms. After that he meant to take Havana, and, if tenable, leave a company of soldiers there, getting back

[1] Naval Records Society, vol. xi. pp. 69-74.

to England on June 10th, 1586. Apart from the enormous spoil of bullion and jewels which would fall into his hands, Drake states, as follows, what he expected to get from the ransom of the towns he took :

San Domingo . .	500,000 ducats.
Santa Marta . .	10,000 ,,
Cartagena . . .	1,000,000 ,,
Panama . . .	1,000,000 ,,
Rich men of Honduras .	100,000 ,,
	2,610,000 ducats.

This in sterling would be about £650,000 for ransoms alone. As we shall see, both the programme was considerably curtailed and the ransoms did not amount to one-tenth of Drake's estimate ; but the whole document is of the greatest interest as showing the huge scope of Drake's design, and with what expectations he set off from Santiago. The schedule gives the impression of having been taken down from conversation, and its scheme to have been elastic and dependent on future circumstances.

But Drake took with him westward a more dangerous enemy than all the Spanish ships-of-war. They had been at sea a week when a discase like plague broke out : so virulent was it that before they arrived at the island of Domenica, only eighteen days after leaving Santiago, more than two hundred men had died. They traded with natives there, took in a store of tobacco and spent Christmas at St. Christopher's Island, where the sick were nursed and the ships thoroughly cleansed and aired. Drake held a council there, and announced to it (his usual method of consultation) the opening move in the campaign, namely (according to his alternative plan) to attack and capture San Domingo on the island

of Haiti. It was supposed to contain much treasure, which was pleasant, but almost pleasanter yet would be the loss of prestige to the Spanish, if their ancient capital was taken. It was the oldest of all their West Indian towns, having been founded in 1496, and subsequently built with great splendour and magnificence: no city in Spain itself except Barcelona excelled it. By report (for Drake only knew it from charts) it had a harbour difficult of access, defended by a nasty castle, and the first step was to find out about that. He therefore sent off a detachment to reconnoitre. They picked up a frigate which was on its way there, with a pilot who knew the coast well, and learned from him that a landing under the guns of the castle, through a difficult and narrow channel, was next to impossible, but that ten miles further down the coast was a far easier disembarkation. This conversational pilot was retained, and a pinnace sent back to Drake with the news, while the reconnoitring squadron remained opposite San Domingo to keep the eyes of the garrison busily employed in watching these disquieting-looking ships.

Drake thought out his plan and joined his advance squadron, and so, just out of gunshot from the castle, there rode a formidable fleet evidently intending a direct assault. As soon as it was dark, he embarked the whole of his troops on pinnaces and light craft, and steering the foremost himself, with the conversational pilot to direct him, he put them ashore ten miles from the city, before the dawn of New Year's Day, 1586. He had given them their orders, and now sailed back at top-speed to his fleet, which he brought nearer inshore, and opened a bombardment on the castle. If he could silence their guns, he probably intended to force a landing there with his crews, but the really important thing was that the garrison should think this was his design. Naturally they did: all eyes were on the fleet with its crowd of

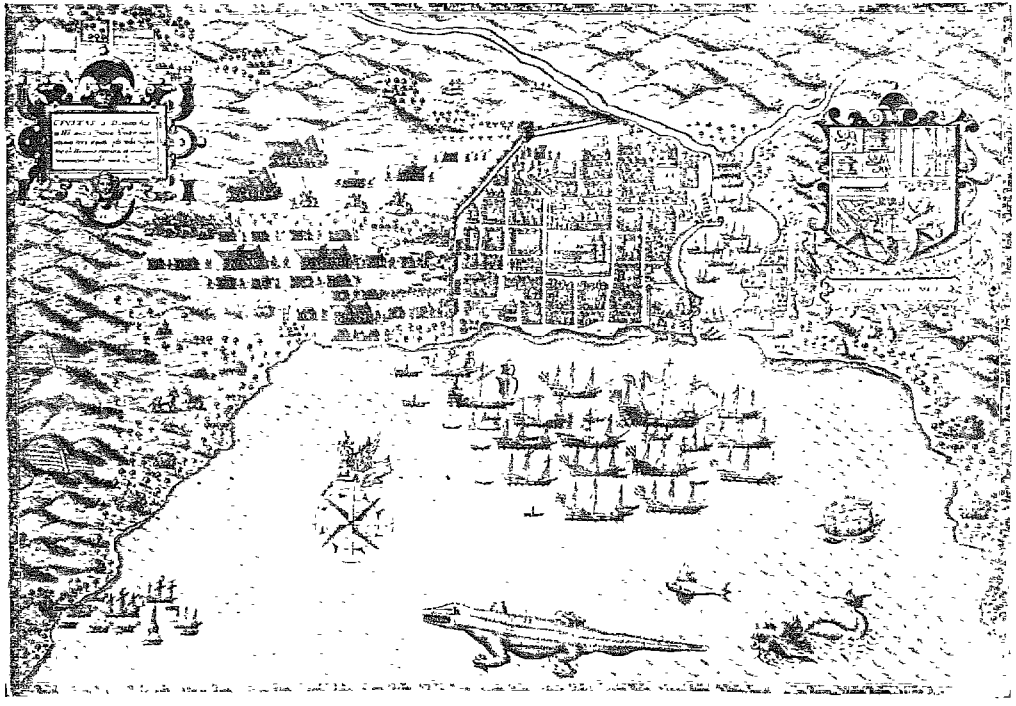
pinnaces and small craft that were being manned. But about noon their attention was diverted, for they perceived, advancing on the town in their rear, the troops that had been landed during the night. Completely surprised, they wheeled the guns that had been pointing seawards, and got in one round. Before they could reload the English troops were upon them, and they fled back into the town, pursuers and pursued in a huddle of cutlasses and muskets, and were driven out into the country landwards.

The town was thus in the hands of the English, but it was too big for them to hold in its entirety, and the castle was still untaken. The troops barricaded themselves in the market-place, and then made a night attack on the castle. Before morning its defenders had evacuated it, the English flag flew from its tower, and Drake negotiated at leisure the difficult entrance into the harbour and occupied it. There was a ship there, likely to be useful, and Drake put a prize crew on board, christened her in honour of the day, the "New Year's Gift," and incorporated her into his squadron. There were galleys also in the harbour, containing English and French prisoners, all of whom he set free.[1]

The search for treasure began, but, as at Santiago and Porto Praya, it was a huge disappointment. Drake, with that incalculable acumen of his, always at its keenest when he was thumping Spaniards, not only liberated the negro slaves he found in the town, but armed them.[2] San Domingo would thus have a Cimaroon menace about its path for the future. He then opened negotiations with the Governor, who had fled into the country, for its ransom. In the course of these he sent out one morning his small negro servant boy to meet an officer who was approaching with a flag of truce. The man

[1] Naval Records Society, vol. xi. p. 76.

[2] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 106.



San Domingo

thrust his lance through him, and the boy crawled back, told his story to Drake, and died at his feet.

No excuse can be made for so savage a treachery : perhaps the officer considered himself affronted by a little black chattel being sent as messenger. But the crime was damnable, and Drake, mad with fury, took two friars, who were among his prisoners, to the spot where the boy had been wounded, and hanged them there. It was the first time and the last that he had ever killed innocent prisoners, but for once, under this foul provocation, he acted as Spaniards were wont to do. Then he sent a message to them that two more prisoners would be hanged every day till the murderer was given up. Next morning he was sent in, and Drake ordered that his own countrymen should hang him at these same gallows themselves. When that was done, he opened negotiations again.

Believing that the city contained immense treasure, Drake asked a ransom that the Governor declared he could not pay. Drake then began burning the town : two hundred sailors were deputed for that, but as it was magnificently built of stone, they did not effect much. Search for treasure still went on, but apart from a great store of provisions and any amount of copper, nothing was discovered. After a month of futile incendiarism, Drake accepted a ransom of 25,000 ducats (£6000), and this was formally paid in the hall of the Governor's palace. In that sumptuous place there was hugely painted on the wall the King of Spain's coat-of-arms, with the motto, " Non sufficit orbis " (" The world is not big enough for me "), and as the money was being paid, Drake's officers asked what this meant. They shook their heads sadly over the interpretation, and said the Queen of England could not possibly permit it. Surely Drake put them up to that. . . .

The fleet then sailed southwards. The capture of

San Domingo had been more enriching to the soul than to the pocket, and Drake's next objective was to take Cartagena, the capital of the Spanish Main. He could not find a pilot, but a dozen years ago, in his first raid on the Main, he had spent a fortnight with pinnaces and the "Pasha" dodging about among the little islands of the harbour, and his marvellous memory enabled him to direct operations without any preliminary reconnaissance.

The town was built close to the shore looking westwards on to the open sea : directly to the south was a small inner harbour very difficult of access, for a spit of land rendered it nearly land-locked, and the narrow entrance was closed by a chain. Outside this was the big outer harbour from the mouth of which ran a wooded promontory to the seaward face of the town. His tactics were precisely the same as at San Domingo, for how could they be bettered ? He entered the outer harbour with his entire fleet, and all afternoon tacked and bustled about as if planning a night assault on the inner harbour, which he had not the faintest intention of attempting. When night fell, he disembarked his troops at the entrance of the outer harbour, with orders to march along this wooded promontory, and make the assault from the west. The signal was to be the sound of firing from the direction of the inner harbour.

This march was through woods, where they kept missing their way, until about midnight Carleill, who was in command, took them down on to the beach, where there would be no possibility of further blind-man's-buff. But they were still half a mile off the town when the firing began, and here a wall of fortification ran from the shore to the inner harbour. They must have been seen too, for a couple of armed Spanish vessels in the inner harbour opened fire on them. But they forced a barricaded passage in the wall, and there was a furious scrap

with its defenders in the dark. They drove them along, and chased them into the town, where they found more barricades in the streets manned by Indians with poisoned arrows. But, as at San Domingo, they established themselves in the market-place, and Cartagena surrendered. The untaken fort at the entrance to the inner harbour had no billet for its bullets, for Drake moved off his feinting fleet, and unless they fired on the town, there was nothing to be done.

The bargaining about ransom began. Drake, no doubt intentionally, asked a sum that could not be paid, namely, £100,000, and the Governor said, "Make it ducats." This was but a quarter of Drake's demand, and he would not accept it, so, after an unavailing hunt for treasure, he began burning the town. This produced an amended offer of 110,000 ducats, and Drake added another 2000 ducats for the priory which was outside the town and the untaken block-house at the entrance to the harbour. The Governor agreed to ransom the priory, but let the block-house go. So Drake blew the block-house into smithereens, and said he would consider.

But while these bargainings were in progress, there had been trouble for the English. Sickness had again broken out in the fleet: it seems to have been malaria, for those who were out after sunset were attacked by it, and we may presume they had been bitten by mosquitos: the death-rate was not high enough for yellow-fever. And then old Thomas Moone, who had been ship's carpenter on the little "Swan" and was now Captain of the "Francis," had, with another officer, been lured into an ambuscade in attempting to capture two Spanish barks and been killed. We know that the next item on Drake's programme had been to take Nombre de Dios again, and march over the Isthmus to the capture of Panama, but now for the first time he lacked that rollick-

ing confidence that had inspired his first raid on the Spanish Main. He was a man of forty-five now, and that may have had something to do with it ; he was also the leader of a national expedition, and not on one of his gleeful irresponsible raids. In any case, he called a council of his land-captains, and no longer just listening to them and then doing precisely as he chose, he asked their considered opinion as to the future. He put three points before them.

(I.) Should they hold Cartagena against the Spanish forces on the Main and the reinforcements which might be coming from Spain, till fresh troops and ships were sent for from England ?

To this the land-captains answered that though, owing to sickness and casualties, there were not more than 700 thoroughly fit troops, they could hold the town, provided the sea-captains could guarantee security against any fleet from Spain.

Now, since Questions II. and III. would not arise if it was decided to hold Cartagena, we must conclude that Drake, on his own responsibility (since no council of sea-captains was called), decided that he could not give this guarantee. Question I., therefore, was answered in the negative, and Question II. arose.

(II.) Should they attempt the rest of the programme, on which the taking of Panama was the next item, or turn homewards ?

The land-captains decided that though their forces had been so weakened by sickness that they could not anticipate success in any further enterprise, they would cheerfully attempt any such operations which Drake ordered.

The decision, therefore, was put back to Drake, for the land-captains, though expressing their own views in the negative, had passed a vote of confidence in him : they would do as he thought best. Here was he close

to the scene of his former raid, where, with a couple of small vessels and a handful of Devonshire boys, he had capered and captured at will, and now he had with him more than ten times that number of trained troops, and a fleet instead of two cockle-shells. But he decided to abandon all further operations and go home.

Now this is so surprising superficially that we must try to figure out what lay at the back of it, not on the surface of it. To accuse Drake of want of enterprise would be, considering his past and future records, an imbecile charge, for never did he err on the side of prudence when dash had the least chance of success. One reason for his deciding against an attack on Panama has been entirely overlooked by those who blame him for it, and it is this. Treasure from Peru was only on the move when the winter rains were over (for the track from Panama was impassable in that season), and even if he took Panama, he would find it empty of treasure, for the last fleet bearing the produce of the year before had already reached Spain. If, on the other hand, he waited till the trains would be normally on the move again, the news of his being in possession of Cartagena must have gone abroad and reached Panama, and it might be taken for certain that no gold would be sent from Peru while he was there.

Again, if we look more closely at these two questions, we see that they are intimately bound up with each other. If he decided to attempt further operations with his land-force, it is clear that the guarantee his land-captains had asked for, namely, security from any Spanish fleet that might bring reinforcements, must apply whether they held Cartagena or not. Safety from the sea was asked for while they were on land, and Drake had already found himself unable to give that guarantee with regard to Question I.: he could not, therefore, give it with regard to Question II. Moreover, since the route to Panama

would not be practicable for at least another month, if he decided to attempt its capture he would have to guarantee safety at Cartagena till then. We are back then at Question I. in order to understand his decision with regard to Question II.

Now Drake has been almost universally blamed, both by contemporary and subsequent judgments, for not holding Cartagena. He had in his hand the massive key to the treasure-house of Peru; not an ounce of gold could reach Spain while he effectively held it, and without gold Spain must collapse. But in truth he was far wiser than his critics. For if he had decided to hold it, he must instantly have sent several ships to England demanding large naval reinforcements without delay, and this would seriously weaken his fleet. These reinforcements would have to reach him before Philip despatched a fleet from Spain, and though Philip was always leaden-footed, he would surely quicken his steps when he had news that the capital of the Spanish Main was in the hands of the English.

Again, what would Elizabeth do in answer to Drake's demand? To make his capture of Cartagena effective, she would have to hurry out strong naval reinforcements to the weakening of her home fleet, just when she knew that Philip was building and equipping ships with all speed for the invasion of England. She would certainly be loth to do that, and might easily refuse, and in that case, where was Drake's guarantee to his land-captains of security from naval attack? If, on the other hand, she was staunch to her little pirate, and sent ships for his support, Philip would have news of that, and there was a grand opportunity for him to attack England. When once reinforcements had gone to Drake, he had the chance of cutting them off from England entirely and holding the mouth of the Channel in force. This consideration Sir William Monson, the greatest of contemporary

authorities, seems to have overlooked. He says it would have annoyed the King of Spain enormously if Drake had held Cartagena, and that he should have done so.[1] But Drake needed far more troops (especially if he meant not only to hold Cartagena, but attack Panama) and a much stronger fleet, and it might conceivably have angered Elizabeth if the King of Spain had made this the occasion, not for ousting Drake, but for invading England.

For all these reasons Drake's decision to evacuate Cartagena and make no attack on Panama was probably the only wise course. He was no longer a hilarious adventurer with boys and cockle-shells, but a responsible national commander (though still a pirate) whose imprudence might cause grave disaster. He therefore put the third question to his Council.

(III.) Should they accept the 100,000 ducats (with the extra 1000 for the priory) which was offered as a ransom, or still hold out for the £100,000 which they had demanded?

The answer was that they should accept it, especially since they had sacked the town of its merchandise, and burned a good part of it. Further, the land-captains unanimously agreed that, since the voyage had not turned out as profitable as they had hoped, they renounced all share in the ransom, "and do freely give and bestow the same wholly upon the poor men who have remained with us in the voyage, meaning as well the sailor as the soldier, wishing with all our hearts it was such and so much as might seem a sufficient reward for their painful endeavours."

There was no more business, and the meeting adjourned. But it was a proud moment for Drake when he heard the last resolution of his land-captains, and thought that he was the commander of these men. Much

[1] Monson, *Naval Tracts*, i. p. 126.

of his voyage of circumnavigation had been embittered by the jealousies between soldiers and sailors, but to-day they were all brothers, and the richer sort emptied their purses for the poorer. That was the spirit he always worked in ; it was that comradeship which had set the English flag flying from the tower of Cartagena, and before long would do greater things yet.

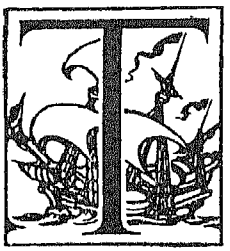
They had held the capital for six weeks, but now the ransom was paid and Drake started on the homeward voyage. But three days out the "New Year's Gift" sprang a bad leak. All night the crew laboured at the pumps, but by morning she had fallen so far behind that the rest of the fleet were out of sight, with the exception of one bark, which, seeing her distress, had stood by her in case she foundered. Drake meantime had seen two of his ships were missing, and turned to find them. He put back into Cartagena for repairs (where his re-appearance on February 14th aroused the most acute dismay), but the leak was so bad that he left the "New Year's Gift" there as a valentine. Then starting again, they made Cape St. Anthony in Cuba, but a fortnight afterwards were back there owing to contrary winds. Water again was needed, and we get a pleasant picture of Drake carrying his bucket among the others to hasten matters. But that was his way, so says the Narrator whom we have been following : he was always at work, "with such wonderful travail of body, as, doubtless, had he been the meanest person as he was the chiefest, he had yet deserved the first place of honour." Do we not see who must have been the source of the harmony between master and soldiers and mariners on this cruise ? Stern disciplinarian he always was, as befitted the General, and for that his men respected him, but he was content to work like the meanest, and for that they loved him.

Setting sail for the second time from Cape St. Anthony, they coasted along Florida to get into the Gulf Stream,

and passed by the Spanish settlements of St. Augustine and St. Helena. These were futile occupations, established merely to growl at other comers. Drake intended to make a raid on St. Helena, but finding no pilot to take him in through the shoal-water, passed on northward to visit the English colony which Walter Raleigh had established in Virginia the year before. Some of the colonists came aboard, and directed Drake to the island of Roanoke, where he would find the Governor, Ralph Lane. The larger ships drew too much water to enter the harbour, and instead, the Governor paid a visit to Drake, who offered him a ship, a pinnace, and a month's stores for his colony of a hundred and three persons, if he wished to push his explorations further. Alternatively he would give the whole lot of them passage to England if they wanted to get home. Lane chose to remain, but was glad of the stores, with which a ship was laden. Unfortunately there arose a sudden storm, and the laden store ship foundered. Drake could not spare stores equal to those that had been lost, but offered Lane a smaller supply. This time the offer of transportation to England was accepted, the colonists were collected and the year-old settlement of Virginia was abandoned, to be colonized anew from the shores to which the fugitive pioneers were now returning. The fleet, with all on board, set sail again on June 18th, 1586, and arrived at Plymouth on July 28th.

CHAPTER XII

THE CADIZ EXPEDITION



HE fame of Drake's exploits, hugely exaggerated, had preceded him, and this exaggeration shows the panic he inspired personally among the friends of Spain and those who were financing King Philip. The Bank of Seville broke, the Bank of Venice, to which the King was a large debtor, seemed likely to follow,[1] and the correspondents of the Fugger Bank at Augsburg were sending the most lugubrious reports to headquarters. He had captured Nombre de Dios, he had annexed Panama, he had taken the island of Hispaniola, and was building fortifications at San Domingo[2] : he had defeated the fleet the King of Spain had sent after him, and driven it squealing back to Seville,[3] and he had captured Havana.[4] Most of this was quite incorrect : Santa Cruz's fleet, for instance, did not leave Spain till the middle of April, long after Drake had gone from Cartagena ; he was supposed to be in possession of Havana at a date when he was within sight of England again, and he had never been to Panama at all. But such news is interesting, as showing the "Drake atmosphere" which he had brewed, and even the austere Burleigh, who had consistently disapproved

[1] Naval Records Society, vol. xi. p. 77.
[2] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 106.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 108.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

of his raids, had to confess that "Sir Francis Drake is a fearful man to the King of Spain."

Very different, in consequence, was his arrival now from that after his far more amazing achievement in the circumnavigation. Then, though he was the popular idol who set men's hearts dancing, it was six months before any official recognition came to him: officially he was cold-shouldered and frowned on. But now, though financially the voyage had not been profitable,[1] the acclamation was public and universal: he was hailed, from the Queen downwards, as England's sheet-anchor in the stormy wind and tempest which was fast approaching. With only the old materials to work on, his genius had transformed the Navy into a new and marvellous weapon: he had found and successfully tested this undreamed-of power, which had lain gleaming like the precious lode in the rock, waiting for its discoverer, and all he wanted to do was to demonstrate its value again and at once. This time there was no prejudice to overcome: his policy and his mastery had proved themselves by the crushing blow he had given to Spanish prestige. All these years it had been a great mail-clad towering bogey, with flaring eyes and flashing sword and invulnerable breast-plate, and Drake in his irreverent way had tweaked the sword from its hand, had sent the breast-plate clattering to the ground, and slapped its face, protesting, with great oaths, that those flaming eyes were but the light of a farthing dip in a rotten turnip. Really it seemed as if he was right, and that when he had told my Lord Sussex that he was quite capable of making war on the King of Spain, it had not been the empty bravado of a swaggering, low-born sea-captain, but the considered statement of the Fearful Man. His next expedition, then, was the logical sequel in his policy: he was demon-

[1] The shareholders received only 15s. for every £1 they had subscribed. (Naval Records Society, vol. xi. pp. 86-96.)

strating the futility of Spanish sea-power, and having proved that to King Philip's great undoing in the far seas, the next step in his proof was to exhibit the truth of his proposition in Spanish waters and on the coasts of Spain.

Just now Elizabeth had the whole country behind her. Close on the heels of Drake's return, the conspiracy which had for its object her assassination and the establishment of Mary Queen of Scots on the throne of England had been discovered. Anthony Babington, once a page of Mary's, directed it, and King Philip, on the outbreak of the insurrection, was to support it by sea. But the plot, when almost ripe, was detected, and Elizabeth promptly executed fourteen of the conspirators. She treated it all with the utmost contempt, for she never had the smallest personal fear for herself, and, with a pish of disdain, went on with her favourite diplomacies. She sat like a great spider in the middle of her far-reaching weavings, ready to dart this way or that, and seize any opportunity that blundered into her meshes, and Drake, impotently buzzing, was kept there for a while till she could make up her mind as to how to use him. Once, at the end of October of 1586, she sent him to Middelburg with £50,000,[1] on some obscure and totally uninteresting affair with Dutch capitalists, and thought that very clever of her : and now she wondered whether the discarded Don Antonio was worth picking up from the floor and putting into her hand again, and now she cast an eye towards Constantinople, for the Sultan highly disapproved of the fort at Aden which the Spanish had built.[2] An alliance might be arranged there, for his fleet in the Mediterranean was very efficient, and could jog Brother Philip's elbow finely. This was a scheme with which she persevered for years, and nothing ever

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 124.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

came of it, though she cajoled the Sultan with compliments and clocks, of which one pair were shaped like galleys and struck every hour, and the other showed the movements of all the planets in the heavens,[1] and she saluted him as the greatest of Princes, and called the Most Christian of Kings the greatest of idolaters.[2] . . . But at present the Porte would not commit itself to make any but the vaguest promise of "not being behindhand next spring."[3] Then, after endless flutterings, she determined to grant the desire of Drake's heart, and early in 1587 told him he might get a fleet together, and worry the Spanish coasts and harbours. His general instructions were just what he desired: he had leave to harass the King's ships as they concentrated for the Armada which Elizabeth (for the moment) believed to be gathering: he might attack the convoys coming with gold from the Indies, he might even enter Spanish harbours,[4] thereby creating a definite *casus belli*. In fact he could continue his private war with the King of Spain in any manner he pleased, while Elizabeth remained at peace with him, and would certainly declare, if convenient, that she had given no sanction whatever to these piratical activities. She had already assured her Brother that Drake's late operations at San Domingo and Cartagena had been conducted without her wish or authority, and if she really thought that Philip believed a word she said, she was the victim of a fond delusion. But it hurt nobody, for she realized that "the gentleman (Drake) careth not if I disavow him."

Ignorant then, if necessary, of all that Drake was doing, Elizabeth gave him four ships from the Royal Navy. His flagship was again the "Elizabeth Bonaventure," and with it was the "Dreadnought" of 400 tons under

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 289.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 120.
[4] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. ii. p. 73.

Thomas Fenner, the "Rainbow" of 500 tons under Henry Bellingham, and the "Golden Lion" of 550 tons which carried his vice-Admiral, William Borough. Borough was an excellent and antiquated theorist in naval matters, holding an official position as Clerk of the Navy, a Meistersinger bound by antique rules of counterpoint, whereas Drake knew no rules of any kind except the extempore notions which his genius told him would produce the melodies that harmonized with his drum. A more unsuitable vice-Admiral for such an Admiral it is impossible to conceive: probably he was sent as a check or brake on Drake's impetuous methods, but trouble might have safely been anticipated if the brake should attempt to perform its office. For when Drake was at sea with the rough water of toppling hazards around him, he could listen to nothing but his own drum, and to apply the brake to his movements was only comparable to tying a live mouse to the tail of a cat, in order to curb the cat's vivacity. Yet it was sadly like Elizabeth to give Drake a free hand, and then, with twittering prudence, to curb the man whose strength lay in freedom of action. Why, otherwise, should an academic expert have been dug out from his useful collations at the Admiralty?

The rest of the squadron was furnished by shareholders, but Drake had the power of selection among the innumerable applicants. Lord Howard, the Lord High Admiral of England, subscribed a galleon, the "White Lion," the Levant Company sent in applications for four more, Drake himself was a shareholder with three ships, and Bideford and Plymouth furnished several smaller vessels. In spite of the statement made by the compiler of the account of this voyage in *Captain Cook's Voyages*,[1] it is clear (since we have the complete list of the ships and their captains) that Frobisher had no command, and

[1] Anderson, *Captain Cook's Voyages*, p. 295.

this may well have been the origin of the jealousy he exhibited towards Drake. In all, counting pinnaces, which were likely to be of enormous use in the type of operations which Drake contemplated, the fleet numbered twenty-three sail. All was precisely to his liking, the squadron of his own selection, and the wide licence that the Queen's commission gave him: as for William Borough, his vice-Admiral, there was no harm in him so long as he remained a meek member of the council of captains which Drake would occasionally summon to acquaint them with his intentions. He was on tenter-hooks to be off, for he remembered the incident of Sir Philip Sidney, and now he knew, better than before, the endless vacillations of which Gloriana was capable.

Never was a foreboding more amply justified. Even while his anchors were dripping ooze on the ships' sides, a messenger from the Queen was spurring to Plymouth with orders that cancelled his freedom of action. Peace with her Brother might yet be preserved if her little pirate did not enter his harbours or set foot on his territory. Brother must not be annoyed too much, or he would declare war: let the little pirate confine himself to piracy at sea. All her pluck had oozed out of her, she was whimpering and wailing again, and praying that her messenger might be in time to stop Drake from annoying Brother Philip beyond bearing.

By the grace of God her messenger was too late. Drake had sailed on April 2nd, 1587, and all that could be done was to send a pinnace after him with these truckling restrictions. Owing to bad weather the pinnace luckily failed to catch him, but as its captain was a near but not acknowledged relation of John Hawkins, it may be questioned if the weather was quite as tempestuous as he reported on his return. It was good enough, anyhow, to enable him to capture a valuable Spanish prize. So Elizabeth comforted herself with the thought

that she had done what she could, and if her Brother was very much vexed at what might happen, she could, without perjuring herself for once, declare that she had sent orders to that Fearful Man not to enter his pretty harbours or molest the ships which he was arming for the conquest of England. And if that monster did work grievous havoc among them, well, so much the better.

Drake drew a long breath when his ship met the lift of the Atlantic. Though he did not know how narrow a squeak he had had, he was relieved to be out of touch with that marvellous and maddening mistress, who was sometimes so kindred and fiery a soul and sometimes so anaemic a trembler. His drum was beating lustily, and after picking up a couple of English ships which his commission entitled him to commandeer, he had time to think out details, for a great gale from the west forced him to tack out to sea and ride it out there. He knew that Philip was collecting and arming ships, though not where this concentration was going on : so, when the gale abated, he must find out.

A ship from Middelburg [1] gave him news that a great gathering of material was going on at Cadiz to join up with the concentration at Lisbon, and so Cadiz was the first destination. Presently Borough, who liked council meetings and discussions, sent across from the "Golden Lion" for instructions, and Drake replied, "Follow your flagship." He had never been to Cadiz, and had no clear notion of the channel and the shoals which might defend it, so really the only plan was to sail straight in. There were two galleys hanging about outside, but Drake, after giving them his broadside, left anybody to deal with them, and held on full-sailed into the harbour. The horrified Clerk of the Navy, aghast at such criminal disregard of all that the text-books said about attacking harbours, had to follow. It was very irregular.

[1] Monson, *Naval Tracts*, vol. i. p. 136.

The flagship swung round the northern promontory, and what richness met Drake's delighted eyes! The outer harbour was crowded with shipping; there were sixty fat ships fitting and loading and unloading. Half a dozen galleys were there for protection, and sorely they needed it. Drake went straight for these, raking them with rapid broadsides. Two fled into the inner harbour, others sought safety under the guns of the fort, where he could not attack them, and having thus cleared off the guard, he turned his attention to the store-laden shipping. Some he burned, some he took, some he plundered, and since it was nightfall before he had finished, he directed his fleet to anchor just where it was, and wait for morning. Already he had burnt or captured the greater part of that industrious concentration of ships and stores, some destined for the Indies, some for the Armada against England, and anybody but Drake would have been satisfied with that, and put out to sea again. He must have known, too, that news of this daring attack would have gone abroad, and that by the next day troops with guns would be hurried to Cadiz, but he had to make a really tidy job of it, and finish it. He had learned also that there was a splendid prize lying in the inner harbour, a great ship belonging to the Lord High Admiral Santa Cruz, and it was impossible to leave it there.

Poor William Borough must have had a wretched night, for the "Golden Lion" was nearer to the guns of the galleys beneath the fort than he altogether liked, but what seems to have agitated him most was that this dreadful Drake had not held a proper council before entering the harbour, and had broken all the rules on which naval strategy was based. He had made no reconnaissance, he knew nothing about the channel, he just sailed in and began whacking away. It is true that this deplorably haphazard business had been successful, for he had taken a dozen ships, and sacked and burned

twice that number, so perhaps his utter disregard (or perhaps ignorance) of academic strategy might be overlooked ; but now, instead of getting safely to sea again, satisfied with a sadly irregular though pretty exploit, he remained in the harbour. Borough felt he must expostulate, and early in the morning he was rowed across to the flagship, only to find that the Admiral was not there, but was believed to be on the " Merchant Royal," which had just slipped into the inner harbour where lay Santa Cruz's galleon and a host of smaller ships. That proved to be the case : Drake had left the Navy ships outside, but, with some privately owned vessels, was now very busy within. He had sacked and sunk the great ship of Santa Cruz, a galleon of 1500 tons,[1] and his pinnaces and small craft were buzzing about the other shipping like a lot of angry wasps. That job was soon finished, and out they came again, having left nothing within worth taking or sinking, and so Drake said he was now ready to go. The fire from the fortress and the galleys beneath it was hot, and Borough, without orders, took the " Golden Lion " out of range.

But though Drake was ready the wind was not, and for the next twelve hours he had to wait for it, under a rather harassing fire from the fort and the shore where guns and troops had been arriving all day. Little harm, however, was done, and at midnight the wind awoke, and he got to sea again, having within the last thirty-six hours sunk thirty-three Spanish ships and two galleys, and taken away with him four more ships loaded with provisions.[2] These had been part of the concentration of equipment for the Armada, and thus the damage he had done both to Spanish material and prestige was enormous. He then anchored, in full sight of the town, to have a little rest. Altogether he had " spoiled " about

[1] Camden Society, *Narrative of Robert Leng*, p. 15.

[2] Barrow, *Life of Drake*. Letter to Walsingham, p. 227.

7000 tons of shipping, and amply revictualled his fleet.[1]

The magnitude of the King of Spain's preparation for the invasion of England astounded Drake. He had struck out such part of it as was being concentrated at Cadiz, but he had heard there was an even more important depot at Lisbon, and though he loved the hunting of treasure-ships from the Indies (which was included in his commission), it was a more urgent, though less lucrative, sport first to smash up ships, stores, and equipments which were being made ready for the Armada. Lisbon itself, with its labyrinthine channel of approach and its three powerful fortresses, was probably uncapturable, but all sorts of ships would be *en route* thither to contribute to the concentration, and much pleasant devastation might be done by cruising about and taking them. But in order to maintain his fleet on the coast, it would be necessary to seize some base for harbourage where he could shelter and water (Cadiz had sufficiently victualled him for the present), and a week later he held a council and announced his intention to his commanders. This audacious scheme was altogether too much for Captain Borough, who had not yet got over Drake's shocking indifference at Cadiz to every established rule of naval warfare. He went back from the council to his ship, composed a prodigious letter to remonstrate with his Admiral, and sent it next morning (April 30th, 1587) across to the "Elizabeth." It was an amazing communication for any officer to make to his superior, and when we consider that a person called Drake happened to be that superior, trouble might be confidently expected. Borough's letter was a series of indictments, to wit :[2]

"I. When Drake summoned an assembly (so-called Council)

[1] Camden Society, *Narrative of Robert Leng*, p. 15.

[2] Barrow, *Life of Drake*, p. 242, etc.

of his officers, he never caused a matter to be debated nor asked for advice, but merely informed them what he intended to do.

"II. At other times when Drake summoned them to a Council he gave them a very good dinner, but sent them (in other respects) empty away, no whit the wiser than when they came. 'Albeit it may please you to term them either Councils or Courts, they are far from the purpose, and not such as in reason they ought to be.'

"III. Drake found all advice offensive, and in consequence Captain Borough did not always speak up as in duty he should have done.

"IV. Drake never treated Captain Borough with due respect. He had no sense of Borough's position, as the Lord Admiral of England always had.

"V. Drake had received certain instructions from Her Majesty, and he construed them as meaning that he could go where he chose and do what he liked. Captain Borough prayed him, 'for his own good,' to be more careful.

"VI. Captain Borough, when he came to the flagship yesterday, heard Drake's intention to land discussed by troops on deck, before Drake had told him of it. Most improper. Besides, Drake must remember that the Lord High Admiral had given him instructions not to land.

"VII. Captain Borough begged to offer a few general remarks on making a landing. It is a risky proceeding and cannot succeed. Landing at all requires a calm sea and a favourable wind, and what, pray, is to happen if, when troops have been landed, the wind changes?"

Now it has usually been supposed that on the receipt of this quite preposterous letter, Drake lost his temper, put Borough under arrest in his own ship, and appointed Captain Marchant to command the "Golden Lion." Sir Julian Corbett even traces the workings of Drake's mind in doing this; how he remembered that Borough had gone out of the harbour at Cadiz without orders; how the tragedy of St. Julian's Bay had permanently

warped Drake's judgment, and how in Borough he seems to have seen another Doughty.[1] He may have done all that (we do not know), but certainly he lost his temper, for three days afterwards Borough again wrote from the "Golden Lion," regretting that Drake took his first letter so badly, and promising to burn his own copy of it, thereby withdrawing it.[2] But that Drake arrested and suspended Borough because of that letter seems highly improbable, for he wrote to Walsingham on May 17th (more than a fortnight later) and made no mention whatever of his having done so, nor lodged any complaint against Borough.[3] On May 21st, however, Drake wrote to Burleigh, saying that though unwilling to complain, he had dismissed Borough, "for in his persisting he had committed a double offence not only against me, but it toucheth further."[4] It is then far more probable that, though Drake lost his temper (and that was neither new nor wonderful), he did not take any extreme step against Borough till after May 17th, when his "persistence" rendered it necessary. This persistence can hardly mean anything else than that Borough gave him another dose of advice, which was more than Drake could stand. The end of the matter—as far as this expedition went—was that on May 27th the crew of the "Golden Lion" mutinied, and sailed straight back to England, carrying the wretched Clerk of the Navy with them. But as he subsequently declared that while he was with the squadron he daily expected that Drake "would have executed upon me his bloodthirsty desire as he did upon Doughty,"[5] he was probably much

[1] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. ii. p. 91.

[2] Barrow, *Life of Drake*, p. 247.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 231. Drake to Walsingham.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 229. Drake to Burleigh.

[5] Barrow, *Life of Drake*, p. 251. This may perhaps account for Sir Julian Corbett's reconstruction of Drake's reflections. But they were only Borough's reflections.

happier among his files at the Admiralty than at sea with that dreadful man.

So Drake lost his temper, and turned to business again. It was an admirable notion (though Borough considered landings nasty, dangerous things) to find a base for his fleet, where he could water and careen, and the King of Spain would hate it. He made a landing at Lagos, but had to retire, though without loss, in the face of cavalry;[1] and having thoughtfully smashed up the Royal fishing fleet, which was on its way to Lisbon with large stores of tunny[2] for the victualling of the Armada, he sailed to Cape St. Vincent again, where there was a convenient little bay. But on the point high above it was a castle, Sagres Castle, which must be taken first, and contrary to the advice of all his military officers, he landed and attacked it. Muskets were no good against well-armed fortifications, so, quite in the old Nombre de Dios style, he heaped brushwood against the gates, basted it with pitch and resin and set fire to it, carrying faggots himself like any other seaman. He wanted Sagres Castle, and there he was in the middle of the smoke and the shot, swearing and bawling encouragement, and making his men laugh and cheer by summoning the Spaniards to surrender in the name of Queen Elizabeth. How horrified Borough would have been at such conduct on the part of an Admiral! Borough would have thought it very irregular, and have directed operations at a suitable distance in a cocked hat, and after a council meeting have seen that this was an impossible task and withdrawn his men. But Drake saw that it was not impossible at all, but only highly unlikely, and so there he was with his Tommies and his tars, staggering under his load of brushwood, and working like a Common Fellow. And before evening the Common

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 134.

[2] Southey, *British Admirals*, vol. iii. p. 201.

Fellow was justified : the Spanish commander was shot and the garrison surrendered. There was a monastery in the castle which, with its church and pictures, was burnt,[1] and Drake got a safe base for his ships in the little harbour below.

From here he reconnoitred Lisbon, and though Mr. Froude says he could easily have passed up the Tagus,[2] Drake at once came to the conclusion that, with its three defensive forts and difficult channels, it was impossible to take it. But Admiral the Marquis of Santa Cruz was at Cascaes Bay, just outside the estuary of the Tagus, with seven galleys, and Drake hung about in the vain hope that he might come out and give battle, occupying his fleet meanwhile with fresh captures of store-ships. But Santa Cruz had no mind for the adventure.[3] He had heard of the heavy loss of store-ships and of his own galleon at Cadiz, and that had bred "such a chagrin in him that he never enjoyed a good day after."[4] His great concentration of material for the Armada had been wiped out, and he would not risk the ships of war. He was a brave and capable officer, and nothing shows more clearly the terror which Drake inspired than his refusal to engage. Apparently Drake got into communication with him, and made some offer for an exchange of prisoners,[5] but nothing came of it, and he retired again to his base below Sagres Castle.

He waited here some days, picking up fresh material destined for the Armada, but by now the alarm had

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 134.

[2] Froude, *English Seamen*, p. 183.

[3] The Fugger Bank correspondent at Madrid says that Don Alonzo de Bazan, Santa Cruz's brother, was in command of seven galleons here, and that he sailed out and had a skirmish with Drake, but was driven back by the English fire. Possibly a few shots were exchanged, but the skirmish can have been of no very enterprising sort.

[4] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. vi. p. 440.

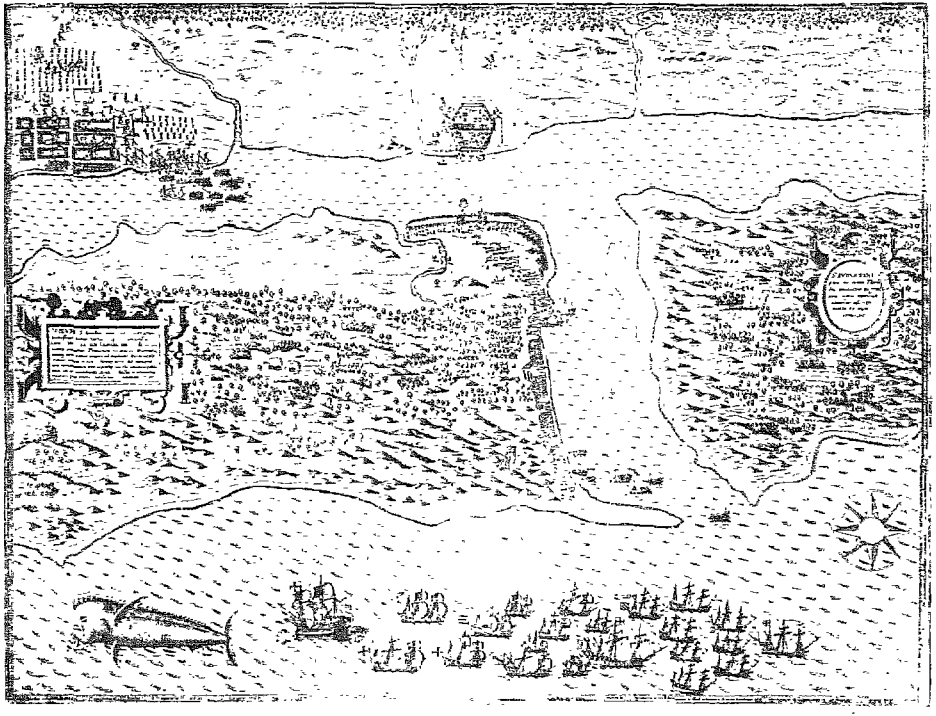
[5] Barrow, *Life of Drake*, p. 232. (Drake to Walsingham.)

spread all along the coast, and shipping remained in port, for nothing on the sea was safe. Spain was in the grip of panic ; King Philip was sending troops this way and that to ports where defences were insecure, and planning large movements of ships to sweep the English away. Now it was Santa Cruz to whom were sent urgent orders to get to sea, now the Duke of Medina Sidonia,[1] but counter-mandate followed mandate in the King's best style, and nothing whatever was done. Then for the Spanish came an ominous morning, when the English anchorage at Cape St. Vincent was found to be empty : Drake and his ships and his prizes had completely disappeared. To suppose that he had gone quietly home to England was beyond the hope of the most sanguine : none doubted that he had sailed westwards, and that presently some convoy of treasure ships from the Indies would be gobbled up. In Spain he had left utter confusion and disorganization, and all the equipment and furnishing of the Armada had to be started anew. A year's careful concentration had been burnt, smashed up, or captured, and none cared to think what the next news of that dreadful man would be.

It was on May 22nd, 1587, that Drake disappeared. He had written less than a week before to Walsingham, giving an account of what he had done, and hoping to do greater things yet : " God make us all thankful again and again," he says, " that we have, although it be little, made a beginning upon the coast of Spain." He asked for more ships, and his letter seems to indicate that he proposed to hang about the Spanish coasts yet awhile.[2] But, as we have seen, he found that coasting vessels, with material for the Armada, had practically ceased to ply, and he had heard that there was a very great prize, the " San Felipe," now on the high seas, sailing towards Lisbon, the chance of capturing which appealed to the

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 133.

[2] Barrow, *Life of Drake*, p. 233. (Drake to Walsingham.)



SAINT AUGUSTINE

merchant ships which were the property of his syndicate.[1] This was worth trying for, and with one of his lightning changes of plan, off he went scouting for it. But he had many sailors and troops in hospital, and so he sent some of his merchant fleet home with them, while he kept the ships of the Navy, giving them the Azores as a rendezvous. Almost immediately he ran into very dirty weather, and when it cleared, he found that though all the Navy ships were in touch, the "Golden Lion" was steering a most inexplicable course, and soon disappeared. Presently Captain Marchant, whom Drake had now appointed to succeed Borough, came to the flagship in a pinnace with the news that the crew of the "Golden Lion" had mutinied, and had sailed home: he himself had left her and rejoined Drake. Instantly Drake summoned his council, and by jury condemned to death Borough and the officers of the mutinous ship.[2]

The loss of the "Golden Lion" was a serious weakening combined with the damage done by the storm, and it seems to have made Drake give up the idea of any large operation. But there was still the great prize he had heard of, and now in sight of the easternmost of the Azores, they spied one evening in shelter of the land some very large ship, man-of-war it might be, or perhaps the "San Felipe." He knew all about her from information picked up on the Portuguese coast: she was the private property of the King of Spain (originally Portuguese) and the largest merchantman in all the navies of the world. By class she was a carrack, and would certainly be armed like a ship of war. Next morning, June 9th, there she was again, and now they could see that she was indeed the "San Felipe." She was making

[1] Monson, *Naval Tracts*, vol. i. p. 137.

[2] Mr. Froude's account of the Borough incident is truly remarkable. He tells us that Borough "became so loud in his clamours that Drake found it necessary to lock him up in his own cabin, and at length to send him home with his ship to complain." (*English Seamen*, p. 180.)

her unsuspecting course towards them, and presently she showed her colours, expecting the response of a friendly flag, but the strange ships to right and left of her were dumb. They crept nearer, till they were within gunshot, and then suddenly the flags and pennants of England blazed from their masts, and the fire from their guns. She answered back, but the English outtalked her, and down came her ensign. No carrack had yet ever fallen to English seamen, and it had always been reckoned a most formidable type of ship. But this capture of the "San Felipe" "taught them that they were no such bugs but that they might be taken." [1]

The repute of her richness had not been exaggerated, for she was laden with tons of spices and silks [2]: such store of them had never yet been seen, and there were jewels and bullion as well. The passengers and crew, unmolested, were put on board a merchant vessel with their luggage and landed on the Azores,[3] and with a prize crew on board, Drake took the "San Felipe" home to Plymouth, where he arrived on June 26th, 1587. The contents of the prize, after a little genteel grabbing on the part of the Queen, who was not content with her allotment of £40,000, were sold for £114,000, and the austere Burleigh, who acted as broker to distribute it between the shareholders, received £1000 as brokerage. Drake's share was £17,000.[4]

As for Drake, now by far the most significant man in England, he hurried up to London to get the Queen's permission to equip another fleet, and start again, without pause, to harry the coasts of Spain.

[1] Hakluyt Society (extra series), vol. vi. p. 443.

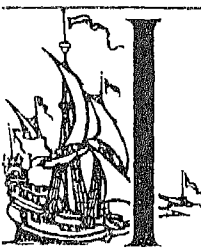
[2] The inventory of the contents of the "San Felipe" included 200 tons of pepper (valued at £40,000), calico, silks, cinnamon (£8000), cloves, ebony, velvet, lacquer, saltpetre, gold, and jewels. (*Narrative of Robert Leng*, pp. 50, 51, appendix.)

[3] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 139.

[4] Calendar of Cecil MSS., part iii. p. 269.

CHAPTER XIII

THE COMING OF THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA



INTO the stew of political phantasmagoria, and in particular of the timidities and indecisions of the Queen during that autumn, it is not needful to enter in detail. Drake's only desire was to get to sea again at once, and finish the work of which, as he had written to Walsingham, he had only made a beginning. Yet the beginning was such that he had left behind him in Spain an almost stupefied dismay, and had come near to prove that William Hertle was right when, two years ago, he had written to Burleigh that Spain was "a great colossus outwards, but inwards stuffed with clouts. . . . This is the scarecrow of the world that Her Majesty hath to contend with."[1] Drake had knocked to bits all the industrious preparation for the Armada, so that it could not possibly sail this year, as King Philip had undoubtedly intended, and as he still maintained it should, till his admirals convinced him that any attempt of the sort must end in disaster.[2] Had Elizabeth there and then given Drake such a commission as she had given him in the spring, with such equipments and ships as Walsingham was eager to furnish, it is more than possible that no Armada would ever have left Spanish shores.

Ever since Drake had spied out the coasts of the

[1] Monson, *Naval Tracts*, vol. i. p. 20. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 161, 162.

Spanish Main with the " Swan " for his entire navy, he had been demonstrating his conviction that he could wage successful war on King Philip. His work had been a continuous *crescendo*; he had captured treasure trains, he had sailed into the Pacific and attacked Spain from the western coast of her new continent, he had taken her island capital there, and her capital on the mainland, and now, in home-harbours, he had knocked to bits the King's preparation for his Armada and had perched on Spanish soil. There he stood, with such a record of achievement to his own name as the combined captains of the English Navy could not jointly emulate, for during the last fifteen years there was nothing that the rest of them had done which rivalled a single one of his amazing voyages. But still Elizabeth, with the half-convinced Burleigh behind her, was fearful of unduly irritating the power of which Drake had shown himself the master. Scrutinize these years as we may, with any eye for detraction, the history of the British Navy had been the history of Drake, and after his death its progress ceased, till nearly a couple of centuries later there arose the man who, in genius of daring and success, was his only equal. It seems incredible to us to-day that, after this expedition to the Spanish coasts, Elizabeth did not give Drake instant commission to frame his next campaign and go to sea. The man was there, and the time was ripe.

But, as usual, she got busy again with hare-brained schemes of persuading the Porte to send a fleet into the Mediterranean,[1] with fresh weavings to get Don Antonio to play the pawn for her queenship, with her gossamer attempts to secure an impossible peace and not offend her Brother of Spain beyond all bearing. She seemed unable to understand that he was working tooth and nail to invade England as soon as Drake would permit him to get ready, and blinded by the illusion of her own diplomatic gifts,

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 146.

she was merely playing into the King's hands in giving him precisely what he wanted, namely, time to repair the immense damage Drake had done, and in allowing his treasure ships to ply the seas unharassed and bring to his exchequer the gold for which it so sorely starved. As long as Drake was not drumming, his navy could equip itself without fear of the inward clouts being sent flying, and even Burleigh, who was no friend to Drake, allowed that it was "a great oversight that Her Majesty did not send Sir F. Drake to sea again, for that if Sir F. had not intercepted the Indian fleet (the taking of which had been of more value than the getting of half Flanders), yet he should have kept the King in such suspense that he should have no leisure to molest you at home."[1] There was the case in a nutshell, and the Queen, by her continual refusals to use the man who had demonstrated to proof the soundness of his policy, and only longed to demonstrate it again, was aiding her enemy to the very best of her power. She had not even the courage of her own mistaken opportunism, for she never persevered in any of her intrigues, and her indecisions this autumn amounted to mania. She had, too, the fatal habit of being convinced by the last person who talked to her, and when we remember that the Controller of her Household was Sir James Crofts, who beyond dispute was in Spanish pay, we can appreciate the irritated despair of her more loyal servants.

Drake did his best. He went straight up to London, as soon as he could make a rough inventory of the contents of the "San Felipe," armed with the weapons to which the Queen would be most likely to surrender, namely, a casket of jewels from the carrack, and an estimate of what her share in the prize would be worth; £40,000, he hoped, would be an unanswerable argument. The Queen wore the jewels, disputed her share of the

[1] Calendar of Cecil MSS., part iii. p. 279.

spoil, declaring that more was due to her, and in a despatch to the Prince of Parma, to whom she was truckling for a treaty of peace, formally disowned Drake's late operations, which had sown her red hair with jewels, had burst her pockets with gold, and had prevented the Armada from being now in the Channel. There was nothing more he could do, for if the Queen would not listen to this golden Lorelei, she would be deafer than the adder to all other voices, and in a fury Drake turned to that matter of Captain Borough which required settlement. He got him arraigned before a Court of Enquiry, accused him of cowardice at Cadiz in taking his ship out of fire of the fort without orders, and charged him with having incited mutiny on the "Golden Lion," demanding that the death penalty passed by his council at sea should be confirmed. The vindictiveness with which he pursued this unfortunate man, whose real faults seem to have been merely inefficiency and meddling pedantry, is amply accounted for by Drake's iron notion of discipline. If he was in command, nothing must be done but by his orders, and mutiny must be punished. But Borough made out an excellent case for himself, and the Court of Enquiry acquitted him on all counts. He was only once employed again on active service, and indeed there was no place for academicians in the new school of the Navy, which Drake had created and was now training.

But nothing ever kept him long from his piratical crusade, and presently he was able to lay before the Queen's Council the list of subscribers he had got for a new expedition, as soon as the Queen felt a little braver. He could point out also that Santa Cruz had just brought safe home to Spain the entire West Indian fleet, one hundred and seventeen vessels in all, carrying bullion to the value of fourteen million ducats.[1] The moral was

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 141.

plain to draw : if only he had been allowed to go to sea before, that huge sum would never have been safely harvested by Spain, and by now be in process of conversion into ships and shot for the Armada. None could doubt any more that the great bird of war was fledging fast with all this food which ought never to have been brought to the nest. Nor was it in Spain alone that fleets were building : before the autumn was over four large warships were already launched on the Scheldt, on the poop of one of which was inscribed in Latin, " Lord Jesus, show me Thy Way " (the which certainly led up the estuary of the Thames). On others work was being feverishly pushed forward, and many more vessels would be ready by Christmas.[1] As well as these, Parma had a fleet of more than two hundred flat-bottomed boats afloat, each of which would hold thirty horses for the use of cavalry on the island of the heretics ; all these would be waiting to join the Armada when it swept up the Channel, and to land troops in England. That scheme was already known : it was Drake in all probability who had discovered it in the spring, for directly after his raid on Cadiz he had written to his friend, Mr. John Fox, explicitly stating that King Philip, in his preparation for the Armada, expected a " very great fleet from the Straits," [2] and this can be no other than Parma's fleet from Dunkirk. That he should have kept so crucial a piece of information from the Government is incredible, and we must conclude that Elizabeth had known of it while she was still employed all this summer in hatching her barren diplomacies. Now every day that passed which left Philip in peace and plenty to finish his preparations made it more dangerously feasible. But at last fresh rumours arrived, false but luckily alarming, that the King was not going to wait for the spring to

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 145.

[2] Camden Society, *Narrative of Robert Leng*, p. 30.

launch his Armada, and about the middle of December 1587 the Lord High Admiral, Lord Howard of Effingham, was permitted to put to sea.

Drake, as his Lieutenant, was in command of the vessels he had been collecting at Plymouth, and to these were added five merchant ships from London, and four battleships of the Royal Navy, the "Revenge," the "Hope," the "Nonpareil," and the "Swiftsure," with a cruiser and several pinnaces. Of these his flagship was the "Revenge," and early in January 1588 he hoisted his flag. He was, of course, under the orders of Howard, but his commission, which precisely suited him, was practically an independent command. Howard's main duty was to guard the Channel, while Drake, whose squadron, when complete, would number thirty sail, was to harass Spanish ships whether in their harbours or at sea, and in fact operate how and where his own exuberant fancy prompted. That must depend on what opportunities the Spaniards made for him, or he for himself; he had *carte blanche* to handle his squadron as he willed, and contrive as many unpleasant surprises for the King of Spain as his fertile brain could suggest to him. Just for that moment when she signed his commission, Elizabeth understood Drake: she recognized that he was a man apart, a law-giver and a law-breaker, whose genius must be allowed to scrap all codes of traditional ordinance, because old things had passed away, and Drake was the evangelist of a new gospel of the sea, undreamed of in the days when the Navy was considered merely a defensive weapon to guard the coast and transport troops. Once or twice, as now, she had a glimpse of his greatness, but it was never a lasting vision: prudence, diplomacy, timorousness obscured it again. Just now she visualized him correctly, and he posted down to Plymouth, leaving the "Revenge" to follow him there. By New Year 1588, it was known to the west country folk that their

idol was off to sea again, and wanted crews for his ships.

Drake's personal reputation was now at its zenith, and soon he was to justify afresh, if justification were needed, the unbounded faith that the nation put in him. Officialdom for the moment endorsed the popular verdict: "Let Drake have the ships he wants, and do what takes his fancy," was the spirit of the commission that had been given him, for rules were not made for such as he. Never before, and only once since, when Nelson's star burned brightest, has there been a leader whose very name was so instinct with magic, or one whom men followed in such exultant confidence, asking nothing more for the full development of their energy and daring than that Drake should be drumming to them. He had all the qualities that kindle devotion: he swore and he cursed and he praised God, and he was brother to the meanest fellow on board if he did his best, and bullying tyrant to the greatest if he shirked. He was a loving comrade and as fiendish as the devil and as full of sky-scraping spirits, when up against tremendous odds, as a boy straight out of school for his holidays. The defects of his great qualities he had too (and yet such defects were almost a condition of his genius), and though unrivalled as a leader, he was ill to work with. Adored by his subordinates, his equals found him impatient, imperious, and deaf to advice. He would not dance to the flutes of others, but only to the measure of his own drum. All the time, in that age in which religion was a real force, a cause for which men went singing to stake or block, there lay behind his swearings and severities, his fun and his foul temper, a deep and ferocious faith that God was with him, and that it was under His direct and special protection that he flew his flag, and for His glory that he pounded the Spaniard. Every despatch that Drake ever wrote reporting his achievements and out-

lining his future aims (when he condescended to communicate them) was based on that absolute conviction. "The grace of God" in his mouth was no conventional form of words: it was the sober defined expression of his trust in the power of the Almighty. Perhaps to-day we should call such a man a religious fanatic, or, if we consider his career of frank piracy, a hypocrite, but either verdict would be the very reverse of the truth. He prayed to God, fervently and constantly, not from fanatic mania, but because he was the simplest and most consistent of Christians, and he singed the King of Spain's beard in the name of Jesus Christ, because the King of Spain was a damnable swindler and a torturer of Protestants, and an enemy of England. "An act of piracy against that cursed Papist is an act of piety, so help me God," said Drake.

Fitly corresponding with his countrymen's devoted belief in him was the abysmal dread with which he was now regarded in Spain, and just as he was to English sailors in that age of faith and superstition, a superman in the wars of God, so to the Spanish he was quite soberly a magician of portentous might in league with Satan. They dreaded him as something superhuman; no news of a son born to an heirless dynasty was ever hailed with such exultant joy, as when the tidings of his death arrived in Spain, and set the towers of every Cathedral rocking with carillons. At Panama that event was celebrated with a public holiday, and pious services were held in thanksgiving for his death and damnation. He had spells which controlled wind and wave: he gazed on magic mirrors in his cabin, and looking therein he could discern where the enemy's ships were and with what strength they were manned: if he wanted more ships himself, he had but to whittle a stick, or hew a block of wood into fragments, and every chip of it that he threw into the sea became a vessel full of armed men. The

terror of him, indeed, became a joke : we find a Spanish lady, invited by the King to a water-party on a lake near Madrid, saying that she dare not take boat for fear of Drake. This belief that he had superhuman powers was by no means confined to Spain, for when, later on, he provided Plymouth with a new water-supply, it was soon whispered round firesides that this water was brought there without the use of spade or conduit. Drake had taken his horse and ridden over the moor till he saw a spring suitable for his purpose, and had addressed it with cabalistic signs and words of wondrous might. Then back he galloped to the town, and lo ! the stream followed close on his horse's heels, cutting its way through rock and bush and briar.[1] Again, that was a strange tale about his first wife. When he set forth on his journey round the world, she had promised to wait for him seven years, at the end of which time, if he returned not, she should be free to wed again. But before the seven years were out she despaired of his coming, and accepted one of her many suitors. Already they were in church, standing before the altar, next moment to become man and wife, when a cannon-ball fell between them, and they started apart. That was Drake's warning : he by his arts knew what was going on, and from the other side of the world he had fired his biggest gun with quite extraordinary accuracy. . . . So popular was the legend that his second wife adopted a version of it, and told how she, too, in one of his long absences, was for taking another husband. On her way to church a great stone fell from the zenith on to the train of her dress, so that she could not move a step, and she knew that Drake had thrown it to stop her.

Now all these pleasing exploits are, of course, the veriest cock-and-bull stories : no one in these chemical days would dream of believing that Drake performed any

[1] Southey, *British Admirals*, vol. iii. p. 237.

of them, and naturally in trying to paint for ourselves that man of genius and intolerance, of sincere and simple piety, of undying vindictiveness and chivalrous pity, we must not include in our psychological palette the lurid tints of any such powers. But we should make a very great mistake if we did not take into account that his contemporaries, friends and foes, did so include them, and in order to form any true picture of him, we have to figure him as how he looked to others then : if we omit that, we lose the relation in which he stood to his age. The possession of magical powers, black and white, was then implicitly accepted and, just as Bothwell in 1590 was believed, not by the uneducated alone, to be leagued with Dr. Fian and his witches,[1] and as Drake was convinced that Doughty had spells which controlled the winds, so his contemporaries, friends and foes, credited him with powers that transcended the wits and wills of normal folk.

To the Spanish mind it was the devil who so richly dowered him, and the highly educated and most illustrious poet of the day, Lope de Vega, who was a soldier in one of the galleons of the Armada, wrote an epic poem, "The Dragontea," all about Drake, and showed that he was none other than the Dragon of the Apocalypse. It is impossible to take a man more seriously than by making him the diabolical hero of an epic poem, and Drake, who to Lope de Vega was the master of black and dire magic, was to his countrymen possessed of superhuman powers, derived from God. That was as seriously believed as was the conviction of the Spanish poet that he had the powers of hell in leash. Drake was a legend in his own lifetime.

Early in January 1588, then, the superman hoisted his flag on the "Revenge," never to take it down till the might of Spain was flotsam on the North Sea and jetsam

[1] Sumner, *History of Witchcraft*, p. 8.

on its coasts. No sooner did it fly there than the young men of the west country flocked in such numbers for service, that if he had had two hundred ships to man instead of thirty, he could have sailed them all full-crewed with volunteers. Down the Channel to join him at Plymouth came the Lord High Admiral, and it looked as if Elizabeth had at last recovered from the palsy of her tremulous diplomacies. But that apparent recuperation was only the prelude to a series of shivering relapses: as the wholesome alarm that the Armada was on the point of sailing died down, she recalled Howard, and though Drake was allowed to continue equipping his ships, the prospect of his putting to sea grew more remote. All the time the wretched woman, with Crofts at her ear, was playing into Philip's hands, and giving him time to complete the vast preparation with which every Spanish port was buzzing. Had Drake been let loose during February, he could, beyond any doubt, have worked even more havoc on Spanish coasts and harbours than he had done the year before, but that was not allowed, because the Queen was renewing peace negotiations with the Prince of Parma in the Netherlands! She still appeared to believe that they might come to something, whereas Parma, with orders from the Escurial, was merely fooling her and keeping her hopeful. Then, in order to impress Parma, she sent Howard to make a Naval demonstration off Flushing, which must have amused him instead. The traitorous Sir John Crofts was among her emissaries, and in answer to the Queen's expressed distrust of the fresh drafts of troops arriving in the Netherlands and of the Spanish naval preparations,[1] the assurance that these had nothing to do with any hostile move against England was enough to convince her that her diplomacies were prospering.

Drake meantime was pulling any string he could lay

[1] Samuel Clark, *The Spanish Invasion*, pp. 18-20.

hands on : he implored Walsingham to urge the danger of delay ; he wrote also to the young Earl of Essex, under whose father he had served in Ireland. Essex was the Queen's latest favourite, and like most of those petted young men, if they had any blood in them, was sadly weary of playing lap-dog to her mature caresses and scoldings, and like Sir Philip Sidney, three years ago, seems to have wanted to join Drake, and, in defiance of Gloriana, to get away to sea. But nothing came of that project, if indeed it was seriously entertained, and the most Essex could do was to press Drake's policy on the Queen. As the fruitless weeks went on, his ships began to grow foul again, and in his magic mirror he must have seen the Spanish equipment which he could so easily have burned, smashed, and sunk, nearing completion. Idleness was, next to the Spanish, what he most loathed, and here he was in that long purgatory of holiday, unable to leave Plymouth for the chance of being unleashed, but growing sicker at heart every day. Then at last there came a despatch for him from London, enclosing a sort of naval programme which the Queen's Council had evolved and the Queen approved.

Now if any one had been playing bowls that day with Drake on Plymouth Hoe when this despatch arrived, he would have been wise to guard against heavy missiles hurled at his face from short range. Who was the inspirational source of that programme is not known : to Drake it must have seemed to have been evolved from the head of Captain Borough (which he had always thought would have been better " off ") in conjunction with Crofts. Indeed, the King of Spain, had he been clever enough, might have evolved it himself for his own exceeding benefit. It proposed to divide the English Navy into three (or possibly four) parts. One was to be stationed in the narrows between Dover and Calais, so as to prevent the junction of the Armada with the Prince

of Parma, who by now had a very handy fleet on the Scheldt, and constituted, as Drake realized, a serious menace. The second part was to hang about off Cornwall and the south of Ireland, so that when that guileless mouse, the Armada, had entered the Channel, it might bang the door behind it. The third portion was to remain in discreet retirement till the Armada was in the Channel, and then descend, with the everlasting Don Antonio, on the coast of Portugal. The fourth portion (the wisdom of the academics had not yet quite settled if there was to be a fourth portion) was to proceed to the neighbourhood of the Azores and intercept convoys from the Indies.

It would be difficult to frame a well-meant programme better calculated to produce a prodigy of disaster for England. The points are perfectly clear : the object was to enclose the Spanish Armada in the Channel between two English fleets, and simultaneously to land on Portuguese coasts and capture Indian convoys. That would be very pretty business, but it gave the King of Spain a unique, a providential opportunity of engaging each portion of the English fleet with the whole weight of his Armada, and wiping them up, neatly and easily, in turn. If by chance he had news of the descent on Portuguese shores, there was nothing to prevent his going about and, with his horizon-lining array, destroying that portion of it. Or, if he pleased, he could engage the detachment which was waiting to bang the west door of the Channel behind him, again with his whole force. The third part of the English fleet would be stationed at the east door of the Channel, and he could then, after landing troops exactly where he chose on our south coast, saunter along and bottle it helplessly up between the Prince of Parma's fleet and his own. Or, having engaged the western fleet, he could leave the eastern in check to Parma, and pursue the possible fourth fleet which had

gone to intercept the Indian trade. It is indeed impossible fully to explore the numerous opportunities which this programme gave Spain of annihilating English sea-power, or to mention all the points in which it reacted from Drake's whole policy.

Drake left his bowls and wrote the immortal letter which saved England then, and presently crowned her with the diadem of the seas. He told "Her Majesty and Your Lordships" that the only defence lay in attack, and that the attack must be delivered, with all available forces, against the main Spanish fleet. That there was danger from the Prince of Parma he did not deny; indeed, the junction of his fleet with the Armada would bring disaster very near. But once stop the main Armada "so that they come not through the seas as conquerors . . . then shall the Prince of Parma have such a check thereby as was meet." Therefore there must be no frittering away of force in the eastern fleet, but the western fleet which was to meet the Armada must contain every fighting unit available. As for the Don Antonio scheme, and the detachment to worry Indian trade routes, the time for that sort of fiddling about was past. What England wanted now (and never was need surer) was a concentration of the fleet here in the west to meet the Armada. The opportunity of knocking its equipment to bits in Spanish ports had been lost, and now the might of Spain must be met. And there must be no stinting of powder and shot: as yet his ships here had less than half of what he thought necessary.

With what impatience he waited for the reply to his inexorable logic can be imagined. When it came he must have felt that at last, and not too soon, the irresolutions and indecisions of the Queen's mind, which, like an ebbing tide, had left him and his efficiency stranded on the shore, had begun to turn, and the blessed sea-

water was creeping up again. It was slow at present, but she wanted to learn from him directly (and that was something) what force was needed in the west for his scheme, and how he proposed to attack the main concentration of the Spanish fleet at Lisbon. (Oh, that Royal mind! She was now beginning to consider the course he had urged on her months before: now it was no longer possible to harass the Spanish fleet in its harbours, for it was believed to be ready to sail.) But in answer to her other question, what he wanted immediately was four more Navy ships and some merchantmen, and permission to put to sea at once and find out where the Spanish Armada was. (They would also require food: sailors had to be fed.) And, in God's name, send the main English fleet down to Plymouth at once. . . .

The salt water crept a little nearer over the quivering quicksands of the Royal mind. Though he got no order to put to sea, the Queen was certainly impressed, and Drake followed up his answer with the news that the scouting pinnace he had sent out had returned with the sure intelligence that the Armada which once could have been crushed in its nest like a new-laid egg was fledged and fit to fly. At that a long ripple hissed up over the sands, and there came the command for him to go up to London at once and put his views before the Council. That implied, anyhow, that the first imbecile programme was not sealed and signed. He went up early in May, put his case before the Queen, and completely won her over. Next day the old programme was a scrap of paper, and Drake's was adopted: all that remained of the former (and that, no doubt, with Drake's approval) was that an adequate force of ships should remain at the east end of the Channel, under Lord Henry Seymour (Lord Howard's nephew), to have an eye to Parma, and a sharp reply if he moved. The significance of this radical reconstruction was that though Lord Howard was still

Lord High Admiral, he had to carry out Drake's scheme, and in all but titular style, Drake was Lord of the Navy of England: its strategy and tactics alike were his. He posted back to Plymouth, and Lord Howard arrived off the port on May 23rd, 1588, with eighteen ships of the Royal Navy, and other private vessels and armed merchantmen of London.

News of his coming had preceded him, and down the Sound to meet him went Drake with all the pomp and ceremony that he loved. His pinnaces and small craft went first, as if reconnoitring, and his thirty ships, three deep in lines of ten, followed, Drake leading them with his Admiral's flag flying on the "Revenge." The two fleets saluted each other with roar of ordnance and blare of trumpets, with beating drums and shouting crews. Drake lowered his flag, as Admiral of Plymouth, before the Lord High Admiral of the English Navy, and the flag of vice-Admiral which Howard was displaying on the "Ark Royal," as well as the Royal Standard, was lowered also. Presently there came to the side of the "Revenge" a boat from the flagship, and it carried with it the vice-Admiral's flag and the Queen's commission to Sir Francis Drake to be vice-Admiral of the whole fleet. Up it went, and the Navy of England saluted him as next in command to Howard. Long had he been the idol of the people, now he had received the highest official recognition that was possible.[1]

The combined fleet watered at Plymouth (a lengthy

[1] It seems impossible, as Ubaldino's second narrative suggests, that Drake expected to be put in supreme titular command of the Armada, or that he thought the post of vice-Admiral in the English Fleet was a degradation to one who was already an Admiral. On the other hand, this second narrative of Ubaldino, as Sir Julian Corbett has pointed out (*Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. ii. p. 445, etc.), was undoubtedly inspired by Drake, and it looks much as if Drake had been rather pompous in his talks with Ubaldino, and told him that for the sake of England he had consented to serve under Howard.

and laborious process, since at present the town had no proper water-supply), and for the next two days Howard's Council, of which Drake was the head, sat in debate as to the practical execution of his "general idea." His programme was to abandon completely all naval defence of the English coast, and to frustrate any such threat by sailing south at once, and attacking the Armada as soon as it put to sea. That all along was the very root and essence of his idea, namely, to defend by means of attack, and not to consider for a single minute whether the Armada was under orders to sail straight into the Channel or to join Parma's fleet by passing round Scotland and so into the North Sea. Who cared what the Armada meant to do? Their business was to prevent it doing anything at all by incessant attack. There was strong opposition in the Council, but Drake bawled it down, and after fruitlessly waiting for overdue stores to arrive from London, the entire fleet put to sea on May 30th, directing their course to Cape Finisterre. But hardly had they got clear when they were met by a south-westerly gale which raged for a week, and they were forced to put back into Plymouth. During this gale, however, one of the English ships had taken a Dutch merchantman coming from Cadiz and bound for Hamburg, and brought it into the Sound. The skipper reported that he had passed Lisbon on June 3rd, and sailed abreast of an Armada that had put out from that port, but by next day it had vanished.[1] The Armada, therefore—or at least such part of it as had concentrated at Lisbon—was at sea: the strong south-westerly gale which had driven the English back to Plymouth would have favoured its swift sailing, and yet it had not appeared. What had happened?

Drake, all agog to get to work, propounded a solution which in point of fact was largely true, though the argu-

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 263.

ments from which he deduced it were wholly erroneous. He guessed that the Lisbon fleet (sighted by the Dutch merchantman) must have put into some Spanish port further north to join up with the rest of the Armada, and by the grace of God there was yet time to batter and thump it as it emerged. Howard agreed, but before the gale abated and they were able to get to sea again, there came from London despatches that ordered him to abandon all attempt to attack the Armada on the Spanish coast, and to keep his entire fleet in touch with England for defence. The whole of Drake's policy, already endorsed by the Queen and her Council, and now at last supported by the unanimous vote of Howard's captains, was scrapped, and the Queen, with another spasm of her quiverings and quailings, had done her best to render the King of Spain the most precious of all her unwitting and witless services.

Howard replied to these lamentable instructions with force and indignation. He was now Drake's man, and it might have been Drake himself who dictated his answer, except that Drake's fury would have rendered the despatch incoherent. The purport was that these new orders contradicted, for no reason, the orders that the Queen had ratified, and that landsmen apparently knew better than the combined brains of England's sea-captains. If the English fleet was allowed to go to sea, it could still get to windward of the Armada, and attack it whatever its destination was. He urged the immediate necessity of that course.

The days went by till mid-June was upon the fleet still tethered at Plymouth. Contrary weather had forced it back there, the disastrous timidity of the Queen had detained it, and now it was still waiting, incredible as it sounds, to take on board the ammunition and foodstuff which should have been there at least three weeks ago. Whether it was by command of the Queen that these

were withheld, in order to keep the fleet there, or whether her habitual parsimony was responsible, or the dilatoriness of the Ordnance and Commissariat departments, is uncertain, but what is quite sure is that a single word from her would have remedied these intolerable delays, and that such word was not spoken. Meantime, all that was known about the movements of the Armada was that the Lisbon division had sailed, and was, on Drake's theory, joining up with contingents from Corunna or Vigo. As a matter of fact, the winds which had prevented the English fleet from reaching the Spanish coast had scattered and badly damaged it, and now, while the larger portion of it put back into Corunna for repair, eighteen ships[1] had reached the Scilly Isles, which was the original rendezvous. News came of their presence there on June 23rd, but before any effective portion of the English fleet could reach them, they had found they were unsupported, and had beaten a swift retreat and rejoined the main body at Corunna. In thus retiring they were probably acting in accordance with the general orders of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, for though he had given instructions that if any captains found themselves detached from the main body of the fleet on the voyage, they were to proceed to the rendezvous and not return to Spain on any excuse, under pain of confiscation of their property and a traitor's death, these ships had arrived at the rendezvous, and found the main fleet not there. They had no reason to suppose that the Admiral was ahead, in which case, according to a further order, they were to proceed to Mount's Bay, and thus their retreat was in order.

But Howard's blast of protest had now twirled round the Royal weathercock again, and the last imbecile order was cancelled, restoring his liberty of action. Stores

[1] Ubaldino gives the number as fourteen. Harleian Miscellany, vol. i. p. 122.

were still insufficient, but once more Drake, arguing that the main Spanish fleet, since it had not appeared, could be nowhere but in some home port, vehemently urged that there was still a chance of realizing his original idea. What mattered provisions? They would re-victual from the store-ships of the King. He carried the day, overriding all opposition, and how his drum must have beat, when at last, on July 7th, the entire fleet swept out to sea, and on the wings of the north wind ran straight for the Spanish coast.

For two days the gale blew prosperously, on the third it veered right round and came strongly from the south. Another day's fair sailing would have brought the whole might of the English Navy to the harbour where Drake had divined that the Armada lay, and we may reasonably suppose that not a ship of it would have escaped, for it was bottled up there, a huddled prey to gun-fire and fire-ships, until the wind changed. The English were now within sight of the coast, but with that adverse gale continuing, they could not approach it. Provisions, already short-rationed, began to fail, and in the bitter end they were obliged to turn and make for Plymouth again to re-victual. There was nothing more within the wit of man to accomplish in face of these inexplicable winds of God.

That same wind which brought the ships hungrily into Plymouth blew fair for the Armada, and now, re-fitted and styled the Invincible, it put out to sea, a flock of sail that spread along the whole southern horizon. Never an hour of calm caused its canvas to slacken, until on Friday, July 19th, 1588, Captain Fleming, a piratical sailor, came posting into Plymouth, where lay the entire English fleet, with the news that he had sighted the Armada off the Lizard.[1]

[1] Monson, *Naval Tracts*, vol. i. p. 154.

CHAPTER XIV[1]

THE PASSING OF THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA



MONG the many legends that have sprung up round Drake, there is none that merits credence less than that which recounts his lunatic behaviour when this news arrived. We are told he was playing bowls on Plymouth Hoe with the Captains of the fleet, and protested that there was plenty of time to finish the game, and beat the Spaniards after he had won it. Indeed, it would be quite as reasonable to accept the legend that he hewed his bowls to bits and threw the pieces into the sea, and that from each chip there sprang a warship fully armed. For the odds which would have been so overwhelmingly against the Spanish, if the north wind had not failed and Drake had succeeded in pinning them helplessly into the harbour of Corunna, were now exactly reversed, and the English fleet was pinned in Plymouth Sound at the mercy of guns and fire-ships, precisely as the Spanish would have been. The only thing that could possibly save England was that her Navy, in the teeth of the south-west wind which still blew, should regain the sea again before the Armada ruffling proudly along from the Lizard closed

[1] In this chapter I have not attempted to give any detailed account of the fight with the Spanish Armada, or solve the many riddles still knotted into it, but rather to follow Drake on the "Revenge."

the entrance of the Sound. Every minute that elapsed brought utter and final disaster nearer, and since there is no real reason to suppose that the news sent Drake stark, staring mad, we must assume that he decided to postpone his game for less critical times, and ran down to the quayside, with the Captains at his heels. Months of indecision and flutterings and incapable administration had brought England into desperate straits.

There was no time to think of that. Sailors were lounging about the quay, and Drake came bawling in among them. Trumpeters and drummers were sent flying off through the street sounding the recall to the ships, and from tavern and skittle-ally the men crowded in. In three minutes the Captains had got their orders : tactics, manœuvres, formations could be decided on afterwards, for the one need that eclipsed all others was that the fleet should somehow get out to sea before the arrival of the Armada. For the present Drake was vice-Admiral no more : he was an able-bodied sweating sailorman, now hauling on his cable with the others, now taking an oar in one of the boats that was towing the "Revenge." As Elizabeth said, "There is need of mirth in England now," and we may imagine the great vice-Admiral as a ray of indefatigable light in this darkest hour, encouraging, jovial, barking out his orders with great oaths, getting a mouthful of wine, and vowing that it was poor stuff compared to the Spanish nectar of which there would soon be abundant store, and all the time sending up from his stout heart his confident supplication to the Lord of Battles. . . . All through the summer night the fevered and superhuman activity went on, and before morning broke, grey and misty, with the wind dropped to a light breeze and rain falling, two-thirds of the fleet were clear of the land with sea-room to fight and sail. The first danger which meant complete

annihilation was past, and now it was time to think of tactics. The one object was to get to windward of the Spanish, who, covering a front of about eight miles,[1] were advancing very slowly on the fallen breeze in crescent formation, the bulge of the crescent pointing up Channel, and "the Ocean groaning" under the ponderous burden.[2] As to their numbers, Drake's and Howard's two estimates agree fairly well: there were about a hundred and twenty sail, of which half were men-of-war. The English numbered about eighty sail in all, of which thirty-five or thereabouts were pinnaces. They were, however, as the fleets went up Channel, reinforced by ships from the Southern ports.

Plymouth was thus left unprotected, but attack (according to Drake's whole policy) being the surest defence, the English fleet could by engaging the Spanish rear, push the Armada past the Sound and up the Channel. The preliminary movement (to get to windward of the Spaniards) was effected during Saturday, and on Sunday morning, July 21st, the fleet was in a favourable position to harass the left wing of the Armada from the rear. Howard then "denounced war" by firing the ordnance of his pinnace, the "Defiance." There was no idea on either side of bringing on a general engagement, and the English tactics were to hamper the enemy's sailing formation by attacking its left wing, and forcing it in towards the centre, and to concentrate their fire upon single ships. They succeeded in detaching the "Santa Anna," which, under Admiral Recaldé, led the rear-guard of the Spanish port wing, and in seriously damaging it. After two hours' battering, the Duke of Medina Sidonia on his flagship the "San Martino," with Don Pedro de Valdes on "Our Lady of the Rosary," came to its rescue. The latter of the two was soon in

[1] Harleian Miscellany, vol. i. p. 124.

[2] Samuel Clark, *The Spanish Invasion*, p. 29.

collision with the "Santa Catalina," and, unknown to the English, was half crippled. Seeing these two ships bearing down, Howard signalled to Drake, who was leading the attack, to break off. . . . Almost simultaneously an explosion occurred on board the "San Salvador," a "great ship" of 800 tons, which caught fire and lagged behind the rest of the Armada. The English detachment recalled from the "Santa Anna" made a pounce on it, but again other Spanish ships came to its assistance, and Howard once more signalled to disengage. Fighting then ended for the day, and the Lord High Admiral summoned his council for debate. The council consisted of seven: Drake, Lord Thomas Howard, Lord Sheffield, Sir Roger Williams (soldier), John Hawkins, Frobisher, and Fenner.

The day's work had not amounted to much: no telling blow had been inflicted on the enemy, but none had been intended, for a general engagement was not part of the programme. But the English knew much more now about their adversary, and what they had learned that day was highly satisfactory. In actual tonnage and in number of guns, the Armada was considerably superior, but Drake's conviction that, in the matter of mobility and rapidity of fire, it was quite outclassed by the English was already demonstrated. Another point, and that a most important one, was now elucidated; previously it had been quite uncertain whether the Armada's instructions were to sail north round Scotland (with the intention probably of making a landing there), and to join up with Parma's fleet *via* the North Sea, or to sail directly up the Channel.

The latter course was now declared, and with the English fleet in its rear to windward, the Armada was committed to it. Before it could effect this junction, however, it would have to deal with Lord Henry Seymour's fleet, which, now stationed off the Downs, was

a very solid obstacle, for it included three of the finest ships in the Navy, the "Rainbow," the "Vanguard," and the "Antelope." More solid yet against the Spanish Admiral's unimpeded progress would be the shoals and difficult tides in the narrows between Dover and Calais. A couple of days' favourable sailing would easily cover the actual distance, but Drake's eye must have danced when he thought of those great ships in the perilous waters, the humours of which he had learned so well as a prentice-lad on the fishing-smack on which he had passed the first years of his seafaring life. He would be a boy again, playing hide-and-seek with strangers in his own home full of blind alleys and steep stairs and awkward corners.

Another matter which must have been debated at that Sunday-evening council was the possibility of Sidonia's attempting to land troops on the Channel coasts. He had been pushed past Plymouth, but the Isle of Wight and the Portsmouth Channel might give him an opportunity of doing this, and of establishing a naval base. Certainly such an intention formed a subsequent item in the Spanish programme, but, though the Pope had promised the King of Spain a million crowns as soon as he had reliable news that the Armada had effected a landing,[1] it is fairly certain that Sidonia never contemplated one before he had joined up with Parma, and his letter to Parma that this junction was his first object confirms this view.[2] Moreover, his instructions from Philip were definite, "You will sail with the whole of the Armada, and go straight to the English Channel, which you will ascend as far as the Cape of Margate, where you will join hands with the Duke of Parma, my nephew": while further secret instructions were to the effect that on no account was a landing to be attempted until Sidonia

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 163.

[2] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, p. 229, note.

had joined up with Parma, or had failed to do so.[1] On the other hand, most naval pundits have interpreted the manœuvrings and skirmishings of the next four days as indicating that a landing was Sidonia's immediate objective, and that the movements of the English fleet prevented him from carrying it out. But this view, as well as disregarding Sidonia's instructions and his clear statement to Parma, disregards also the letter that Drake wrote to Lord Henry Seymour as soon as the council was over that Sunday night. The council certainly anticipated nothing of the kind ; had it done so, it seems inevitable that Drake, with his passion for concentrating on the Armada, would have insisted that Lord Henry Seymour's powerful squadron be ordered to join the main fleet and attack the right wing of the Armada, as it attempted such landing, while the rest pounded at the left. But Howard's instructions, as forwarded by Drake[2] to Seymour, were " that those ships serving under your charge should be put into the best and strongest manner you may, and ready to assist his Lordship for the best encountering of them (the Armada) *in those parts where you now are.*" Clearly, then, Howard's Council (including Drake) believed that the Armada was meaning to pass straight up the Channel, to join Parma's fleet. So he warned Seymour to be alert on his present station. On the operations of the day Drake, in this letter to Seymour, had only a cursory postscript. " There hath passed some common shot between some of our fleet and some of theirs," was his comment. But he did not think that the Spaniards were despicable foes, for he sounds his first note of respect, " They are determined to sell their lives with blows."

So, when the council was over, Drake went drumming

[1] Fernandez Duro, *La Armada Invincibile*, vol ii. pp. 6, 14. (Monson, *Naval Tracts*, vol. i. p. 50.)

[2] Barrow, *Life of Drake*, p. 290.

back to his ship, and wrote this letter to Seymour. The orders for the night were to keep sniffing at the heels of the Armada, and the "Revenge" was to lead the pack. Next to the "Revenge" came Howard on the flagship, the "Ark," steering by the lantern on the stern of the "Revenge," and the rest of the fleet followed. Drake, in fact, was in charge of the movements of the fleet, and the Lord High Admiral hearkened to his drum. The fleet took up this formation at midnight on Sunday, and since the Armada was a slow-moving body, keeping in touch with it was only a saunter for the swifter "Revenge." While still there was but a glimmer of the coming dawn, Drake, according to the report he made to his Admiral next day, saw certain ships sailing parallel with his course up Channel. Thinking that these might belong to the Armada and were executing some nocturnal manœuvre, he turned and went after them, extinguishing his lantern, so as not to mislead the rest of the fleet into following him.

Drake was certainly disobeying orders in so doing: on the other hand, if he had a reasonable suspicion that those dim ships were manœuvring vessels of the enemy, he was bound, as leading the fleet, to find out. He overhauled them, and satisfied himself that they were peaceful German merchantmen, seeking safe convoy up the Channel, and this he gave them, telling them to attach themselves to the English. Day was on the dawn now, and before he could put about to rejoin his fleet, which had passed on ahead, he saw near him a vessel about which there could be no mistake, for it was certainly one of the great ships of Spain, without bowsprit or foremast, and lagging, like a wounded sea-bird, far behind the rest of the flock. Instantly he ran close up to her, and bawled out to her to surrender, giving the excellent reason that he was Drake, and was also in a great hurry, which was indeed true, as he ought at this

moment to have been leading the English fleet. This great ship was no other than "Our Lady of the Rosary," badly damaged in collision yesterday, and now helpless. Whether for that reason or, as Drake's crew exultantly averred, for mere terror of his dreaded name, its Captain, Don Pedro de Valdes, struck his colours,[1] and, with forty officers, was brought aboard the "Revenge." Don Pedro paid Drake the most fulsome compliments, assuring him that he would have yielded to no other but the "fiery Drake, whose valour and felicity were so great that Mars and Neptune seemed to attend him." But no butter could be too thick for Drake, and Don Pedro was lodged in his own cabin and refreshed with food and music and compliments. "Our Lady of the Rosary" carried much that was valuable and curious: there were 50,000 ducats on board, a large supply of whips made of cord and wire, with which (so Don Pedro stated in his subsequent examination before the Lords of the Privy Council) the Spaniards intended to flog to death the English heretics,[2] and some beautiful jewelled swords which the King of Spain had designed to present to notable English Catholics. By this sad mischance they went to a red-hot Protestant, and Drake, despatching the ship itself to Dartmouth, hurried after the English fleet. Don Pedro, with his officers and the more valuable loot, were kept on board the "Revenge," and there they stayed till the remnant of the Armada, with Drake in pursuit, was flying northwards. Don Pedro thus witnessed the collapse and flight of the Invincible, and he and the loot were then sent back as prisoners and property of Drake's, and landed at Rye[3] on July 31st.

[1] Mr. Froude (*English Seamen*, p. 206) says she put up a brave defence. I cannot find who told him so.

[2] Samuel Clark, *The Spanish Invasion* p. 60.

[3] It is possible that the magnificent mahogany altar in the Clare Chapel in Rye Parish Church was among these. Local tradition, which can be

The English fleet meantime had experienced some agitating moments. Incredible as it seems, the disappearance first of the "Revenge's" stern-lantern, and then of the "Revenge," had never been noticed on the "Ark," and Howard, under the impression that Drake was still leading, had been following the lights of some rear-vessel of the Armada, supposing that they were his. His look-out officer ought, of course, to have been court-martialled, for if there was enough light for Drake to see the ships of suspicious origin, there must have been sufficient for this gentleman to have seen the disappearance of the "Revenge." As it was, when broad dawn came, the "Ark," with two other ships, the "Bear" and the "Mary Rose," found themselves mixed up with the rear-guard of the Armada, all by themselves, for the remainder of the fleet, seeing that something inscrutable had occurred, shortened sail, since they had been told not to engage, and were now some miles behind. So, just about the time when pretty speeches and high compliments (so dear to Drake's soul) were fluttering about on the "Revenge," the Lord High Admiral was in imminent danger of being captured by the Armada. Had that happened, the chief blame must certainly have lain on the bad watch kept on the flagship.

Now Drake was not responsible for the bad watch kept on the flagship. He might possibly have sent a

traced back into the seventeenth century, has always affirmed that it came from a ship of the Armada, and there are points about the altar that endorse it. It is Spanish in character, the capitals of the legs being the heads of the lion of Castile; it bears on the sides the cockle-shell of St. James. At the back there are pierced five holes, clearly to clamp it to a wall, which would be unusual in an altar from a church on *terra firma*, but exactly what we should expect on one that came from a chapel on a ship. Drake certainly did land his capture at Rye; this, combined with the ancient local tradition, makes the identification very reasonable. Experts, however, disagree about the style and nationality of the altar, and are not likely to desist.

boat back to the "Ark," saying that in performance of his duty he had left his post as leader of the fleet to find out what these mysterious ships were. He might also, perhaps, have turned back the moment he was satisfied about them, but, it must be remembered, he had just then stumbled upon this great galleon, which was undoubtedly a Spanish warship. He had no idea how badly she was injured, and if he had left her there untaken she might have been repaired and become a fighting force again. It was therefore clearly his duty to capture her, just as it was his duty, on seeing suspicious sails, to find out who the strange ships were. It must be remembered also that when he stayed to make capture of "Our Lady of the Rosary," he had no idea she carried 50,000 ducats and jewelled swords, and while it may freely be admitted that this would have strengthened his decision to take her, it was duty, not temptation, that caused him to do so.

During the morning Howard extricated himself from his perilous position, captured the "San Salvador," on which a serious explosion, wrecking her upper decks, had occurred the day before, and in the afternoon Drake caught the fleet up again, and gave his Admiral his account of this nocturnal adventure, which Howard accepted. But another version of it was hinted at, and it was said that he deliberately forsook his post because he saw a crippled Spanish ship, and lay by her all night in order to make a prize of her, and that this story of the suspicious ships was a sheer invention of his. In consequence it has always been considered doubtful as to what really happened, and Drake's reputation has never been quite clean of the suspicion that he left his station in order to capture a prize. But now, nearly three and a half centuries later, a confirmation of his account has turned up, which puts beyond a doubt the correctness of his report to Lord Howard. This is a

communication from the captain of one of those very German ships which were sailing up the Channel. It is dated Hamburg, August 3rd and 4th, 1588, and runs as follows[1] :—

"Hans Buttber has arrived off the town in a big ship. He came through the Channel from San Lucar. He was with Captain Drake for four or five days, and joined the Englishman on the twenty-first of last month (*i.e.* this particular Sunday night). Drake captured Don Pedro de Valdes, Admiral of fourteen vessels, and had him and the other nobles brought on to his own ship. He gave them a banquet and treated them very handsomely, entertained them besides with trumpets and music. . . . *All this happened in the presence of the skipper.*"

This seems to settle the matter completely. Drake left his post that night, not to capture a prize, but, as he told Howard, because it was his duty to investigate the presence of strange ships, on one of which was this independent witness in whose presence he subsequently captured Don Pedro. Frobisher, however, already jealous of Drake's position, believed and propagated the scandalous version. He was so outraged by this gross breach of discipline that he swore that unless Drake gave him a share of the prize, he would have "the best blood in his belly." This luminous remark enables us to see precisely what the outrage on Frobisher's feelings was.[2]

At nightfall on Monday, July 22nd, after an actionless day, the two fleets were lying off Portland Bill, in a windless calm. During the night the Spaniards made an attempt to capture an English merchantman, somewhat isolated, by an attack of galleasses, or oared ships,

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 168.

[2] Frobisher had been Drake's vice-Admiral in the expedition to the Indies of 1585, but had been given no command in Drake's raid on the Spanish coasts in 1587. Possibly this had something to do with his marked hostility to Drake afterwards.

but a breeze sprang up, and she slipped away. The breeze, however, sprang up from an inconvenient direction, for the wind had veered into the north-east, and for some hours the Armada was to windward of the English, and on Tuesday morning there began a series of operations which has puzzled contemporary and subsequent historians as much as it then puzzled the Spaniards themselves. It was a day of disconnected scraps and skirmishes, in which Drake's share was a bewildering sort of conjuring entertainment which showed the vastly superior mobility of the English. While one squadron of ships was dealt out like a pack of cards, ostentatiously placed on the table of the sea, and the Spaniards were "choosing" one, the whole pack was gathered up, shuffled, and arranged in quite a different pattern somewhere else. Sidonia's eyes were glued to these conjuring tricks, so that inattention should not allow a surprise to be sprung on him, and their object, from the English point of view, was thus secured. Little firing was done by the English, because already their powder and shot, thanks to the criminal parsimony with which it had been doled out, was running low, and it was necessary to keep the enemy inexpensively engaged till it was replenished. So in and out all day, mostly silent, except for one short and concentrated bombardment of the "San Martino," flitted the elusive ships, waiting for the food which should give their guns voice again. Drake was always alert to seize an occasion, but the Armada was wary, not understanding what was going on, and this was the object of these bewildering manœuvres. During the afternoon fresh supplies of ammunition began to arrive, and, not less welcomely, the wind changed again, and put the English once more to windward of the Armada.

The powder and shot, for which Howard had hitherto appealed in vain, were still not in the least adequate, for within a few days there was shortage again. Though

the Queen perhaps was not directly responsible for this chronic starvation, it is certain that a couple of furious oaths from her would have put right so iniquitous an economy. Her whole soul was set on the destruction of the Armada, but even in these supreme moments she liked getting it done as inexpensively as possible : never did the salvation of her beloved country succeed in knocking her parsimony off its perch. . . . But a little ammunition was better than none, and that night and next day, Wednesday, July 24th, which was dead calm, the English were busy with renewing their emptiness of powder and provisions, and in assimilating into the fleet fourteen ships which had joined it from Plymouth, with the mob of volunteers who offered themselves for service.

Late in the day a breeze sprang up, but neither side attacked, and Thursday, July 25th, saw the fleets opposite the Isle of Wight. On the Spanish side nothing had yet been heard of Parma, and when that morning Sidonia was seen to be provoking a general action, it has been supposed that he had changed his mind about making the junction with Parma his first object, and was intending to force a landing on the island, and establish some naval base in the Solent. Moreover, the day was the feast of San Domingo, his patron saint and traditional ancestor ; no morning could be more auspicious, and the Armada blazed into banners and hallowed symbols. But among the confusing accounts of that day's action, it is impossible to find any manœuvres of his which can be interpreted into a preliminary for a landing, and, in view of his explicit orders, it seems far more likely that his object was to engage the English, in order to give time for Parma (to whom he had already sent a despatch-boat) to join him.

The English, now reinforced and reammunitioned, were ready to accept battle, and after a little skirmish-

ing round the crippled "Santa Anna," which had got detached from the main body, Howard in the centre, and Frobisher on the left wing, advanced to the capture. They were well in front of their squadrons, and now, when they were close to the Spanish galleons, the wind completely dropped, and it looked as if San Domingo was awake. The "Ark's" boats were launched to tow her up to the "Santa Anna," when an attack was made by the oared Spanish galleasses. In the dead calm the ships of Howard's squadron could not go to the rescue, and he and Frobisher were cut off. Their capture must have seemed imminent to the encompassing enemy, when the dead wind came to life again, and the sails of the "Ark" flapped and filled. From moment to moment the wind freshened, till it was blowing half a gale, and on its swift wings there swept down on to the slower-moving Spaniards the combined squadrons of Drake and Hawkins. Each ship, putting about as it came within short range, poured out the hell of its rapid fire.

The position was completely reversed. An hour before there was a noble capture to be made at leisure, and now the left wing of the Armada was being forced in upon the centre, and the whole formation, with the head wind preventing any possible advance, was drifting under a murderous fire towards the deadly shoals of the Owers. The action lasted five hours, during which time the peril of the Armada was momently increasing. Then the wind veered round to north-west, and Sidonia set sail for the coast of France, in order to get out of this wasps' nest, and join Parma's fleet as soon as possible. San Domingo must have dozed off, and, as Spanish prisoners said, Christ showed Himself a Lutheran.[1]

It had been a great day for the English Navy, and, above all, for Drake's tactics in swift unexpected movements. But though the Armada had been driven off the

[1] Harleian Miscellany, vol. i. p. 150.

English coast, it had suffered no serious crippling as a fighting force, and was still formidably proceeding up Channel on the last stage of its journey, as originally planned, to join Parma outside Dunkirk. The peril in which the realm stood was, as yet, not markedly diminished; indeed, every hour that brought the Spaniards nearer this junction with Parma accentuated it. On the other hand, the Invincible, though still unvanquished, had now, on the dawn of Friday, July 26th, been for a week in touch with the English coast, and for five days in close touch with the fleet, and so far from effecting a landing on the one, or proving its invincibility to the other, it was still being pushed up the Channel, as if the English were quite favouring its advance. It had learned also that in point of seamanship and rapidity of gunfire it had met not its match but its immeasurable superior, and if the English could not claim to have demonstrated that to any decisive purpose, there was not a single captain in the Armada who was not aware of it.

Throughout Friday, as the two fleets drifted on in an almost windless calm, or were taken aback by the tide, some inkling of coming doom, or at least a grave uneasiness, defined itself dimly in Sidonia's mind, and, like the moving finger on the wall, wrote strange runes on the lead-coloured sea. That morning he sent off a pinnace to Dunkirk, following the one he had despatched the day before. He recognized the awkward heaviness in movement of his own ships, and bade Parma send him forty light vessels[1] which could cope with the antic mobility of the English. As the morning went on and still no reply came to his message of the day before, his uneasiness increased, and he sent yet a third pinnace carrying the same urgent demand. He looked eastwards from his poop, "high as a church,"[2] hoping to

[1] Barrow, *Life of Drake*, p. 297.

[2] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 172.

see the succouring sails, but, though the day was clear, there was no sign of them. To the south lay the coast of France; to the north-west, calm-bound, like himself, the English fleet, but should a breath of wind spring up, they would steal magically nearer, and Drake, the terror of Spain, would lead them. It was he, Sidonia knew, who was the inspiration of the foe, and only Drake could tell what Drake intended. His ship flitted here and there like a bat's shadow; it wheeled and blazed its ruinous broadside, and like a shadow it was gone again. Sidonia's sailors had strange legends about him: ships sprang up on the sea if he whittled a stick into the water. Incredible, no doubt, but yet . . . Yesterday had been the feast of San Domingo, and, calling on his holy name, Sidonia had advanced to the attack that his soul knew must be irresistible. Then Drake, in his shadow-ships, had slung hell's fires on him, and where had San Domingo been? Yet surely the Armada was under God's protection, for had not the Holy Father blessed it, and promulgated a Bull making the Crown of England feudatory to the See of Rome? That sacred document had been translated into English, and thousands of copies had been printed at Antwerp to be distributed when the Armada landed its troops in the new province. . . . Sidonia began to consider the wisdom of sailing straight to Dunkirk, before he had news that Parma was ready. But the pilots warned him of the dangerous shoals and currents of the North Sea, and, had they known, they might also have warned him of some more ships under Seymour, round the corner of the heretic island. That evening the wind began to stir again, and he made up his mind to wait for Parma's reply, and anchor off Calais in French waters. The English would think twice before following him there.

The wind increased, and he made full sail for Calais, and when Saturday, July 27th, dawned, dark and rain-

streaked, he was within a few hours of the French port. But swinging along close at his heels was the English fleet, and the "Revenge" led it. Drake knew that Lord Henry Seymour was alert and competent to prevent the junction of the Armada with Parma, even if Parma had the power and the will to break out of Dunkirk, and now, with Sidonia nervously awaiting his colleague and eager to realize that happy meeting, he was following rather than pushing the Armada into the dangerous and difficult waters that had been the instructive playground of his own boyhood, and his drum was beating, and he thought no more of that damned Frobisher, who had openly said that he had deserted his post four nights ago to pick up a prize. The fellow had been knighted yesterday with Hawkins and some of those grand relations of Howard's, but what did he care, when the wicked grey North Sea was opening in front of him and the might of Spain was presently to be delivered into his hand? Whatever the Armada did now, whether it crept up under the French coast or made straight for Dunkirk, he had something for it which would make Sidonia wish he was back in his orange-groves again. The sea was choppy, the grey tides ran strong; it was just that dirty squally weather which made his eyes dance. All day he gained just a little on the enemy, closely watching them, and then he went down to read prayers to his ship's company before supper. It was the 27th evening of the month, and from his prayer-book, with his arms on the cover, he read how the Lord turned the captivity of His chosen, and how their mouth was filled with laughter and their tongue with joy. The Lord had done great things for them already, and a greater reaping was at hand.

Supper over, up he went again, for his eyes were starving for the sight of the sailing castles of Spain, and as he peered through the windy drift he saw that the

cliffs of Calais were close, and suddenly the towering sails that he followed were furled. From the "Ark" came the signal to anchor, and Sidonia looked west and saw the pack of sea-wolves still on his trail.

Naval critics have generally derided Sidonia as a figure of fun, an aristocrat, an excellent farmer, but no sailor, and these gentlemen make us feel that it was indeed fortunate for England that none of them were in command. But Sidonia was following out the instructions he had received, to make his junction with Parma his first object, and he was doing this with skill and success. He had brought his fleet with but slight loss through the Channel, he had extricated it from at least one perilous position, and he had shown as much competence as Howard: Howard, however, had the advantage of having a genius at his back. It was Drake whom Sidonia feared, and he must now have had the uneasy consciousness that Drake had no objection to his successful performance. . . . And Sunday morning brought little comfort to him. His first messenger to Parma returned with the news that he was at Bruges, and that (though reams of Pope Sixtus v's Bull were printed and ready) the embarkation of troops and stores on the fleet which Sidonia hoped would join him to-day had not yet begun. The howling of the wolves sounded the more ominous for these ill tidings, and surely the pack was larger than before. So indeed it was, for that morning Lord Henry Seymour joined the main fleet with twenty ships, which were now taking up their places to seaward. Sidonia might even have seen a pinnace put across to the "Ark" from the "Revenge," and another brought Frobisher from the "Triumph," and Sir John Hawkins came from the "Victory," and from the "Rainbow," newly arrived, came Seymour. The little figures were visible on the poop of the flagship, and then the sea-captains went below, to consult, like grim

physicians in conclave, over the best modes of euthanasia. There they settled to send eight fire-ships[1] among the Armada as it lay at anchor, and since the wind served, and would blow with the tide that night, there was no time to send to Dover for hulks that were lying there in readiness. Eight of the smaller and less efficient merchantmen were selected, and among these was the "Thomas," the property of Drake.[2] Sidonia would have watched long before the captains came up on deck again—that quick-moving, thick-set, little fellow was Drake—and they observed the weather, and went back to their ships. Presently Drake's squadron moved a little more inshore, so that now it was to the direct windward of the Armada. Then all was quiet again, and the wolves sat and watched, and their lights gleamed like eyes.

The rain had ceased, but as the moonless night darkened, the wind grew fresher. Patrol boats scouted round the Spanish fleet to give warning of any sign of a night attack, but the hours ticked quietly on till midnight, and the lights of the English ships showed that they still rode at anchor. There came a half-hour of slack water, and the flood-tide came pouring up Channel with the wind to speed it. And then, out of the windy darkness, came the terror by night. A ship on fire, with all sails spread, slipped forth from behind the English line, and as it moved forward on swift tide and favouring wind, the brushwood on the deck burned higher, and the flames licked up the mast, and the sails blazed wide, for sails and deck and mast were daubed thick with pitch and resin and brimstone and wild-fire. Seven

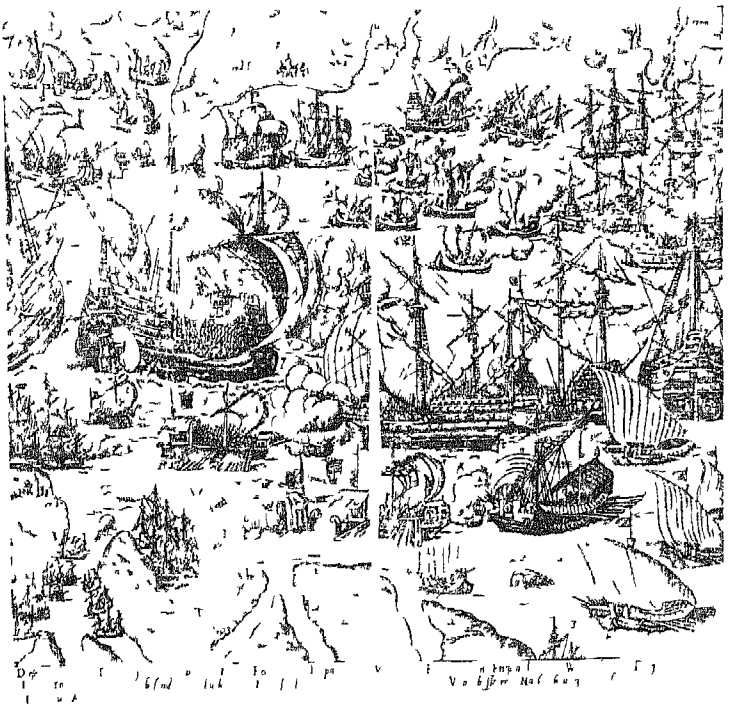
[1] The idea of the fire-ships is supposed to have originated with the Queen. Harleian Miscellany, vol. i. p. 133.

[2] Drake sent in a bill to the Government for the loss of this ship, claiming £1000. Lady Eliott Drake, *Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake*, vol. i. p. 93.

more followed, and all this fleet of fire bore down full on the anchored Armada. Every gun on the burning ships had been loaded, and the gunners were the flames that would presently lick the touch-holes.

To remain in the path of that advancing blaze meant destruction, and so swiftly was it bearing down that there was no time to weigh anchor. Panic seized the entire Armada, ship after ship cut or slipped its cables, and amid crash and collision, and in unimaginable confusion, they streamed helter-skelter away, steering north-east, out of the path of the Terror. So swift was their flight that not one of the fire-ships found a billet for its flames, but the Armada was dislodged from its anchorage in French waters as a ripe orange is shaken from its bough, and when morning dawned it lay out in the North Sea, just where Drake would have it. Sidonia had anchored off Gravelines, and was signalling to his fleet to join him and get into formation again, but at present it was scattered unshepherded, like sheep that have burst from the fold into which the wolves have leaped.

The English captains in council the day before had laid their plans for the sequel of the fire-ships, and the orders were to pursue the disorganized Armada before it could form again, and play havoc with its scattered ships. Howard was to lead with his squadron, Drake to follow, and as soon as day broke the Admiral gave the signal to weigh anchor. No such opportunity for smashing up the Armada had occurred in all the week's fighting, but now the chance was as golden as the light in the east, and failure was impossible if the attack was delivered instantly and in full force before Sidonia could rally his vagrants. At that supreme moment Howard imperilled the success of the whole scheme. He saw the most splendid of all the galleasses of Spain limping back towards Calais, and, for the sake of that prize, he did what Drake has been wrongly accused of having done,



THE ARMADA OFF GRAVELINES

and instead of leading the fleet into action he drew off his squadron for the capture of a single vessel. But we should probably be quite wrong if we accused him of mere cupidity, for Howard was a man of the highest principles, and he was following out his own often-declared principle, that the right way to fight the Armada was to pluck it feather by feather. He had simply not understood that here (if he had carried out his own orders) was a sure chance of wringing the neck of the bird.

Drake's orders had been to follow his Admiral, but he would not have been Drake if he had done so. Instead, he turned seawards, where the "San Martino" was rallying the scattered galleons. Frobisher and Hawkins followed him, and thus Drake was in actual as well as virtual command. Round Sidonia were now forming some forty of his finest ships, and Drake directed his course straight for the flagship, but not till he was within a cable's length did he open fire. Then, at that short, deadly range, his bow-guns barked, and turning rapidly he poured into her his withering broadside. Loading again, he drove on the group of galleons on Sidonia's flank, while Frobisher and Hawkins continued battering the "San Martino," whose mast was so weakened by shot that on the subsequent voyage it could not bear full sail.[1] The fire from the Spanish guns flew high, for the most part, over their assailants, but the sides of their great ships were riddled by the plugging round-shot, and their decks swam with the red slaughter. Galleon after galleon, shattered and disabled, ceased fire, but not one surrendered. Indeed, as Drake had said a week before, they meant to sell their lives dearly, and they showed that morning that the high valour of Spain was no empty phrase.

It was not till mid-day that Howard returned from his

[1] Harleian Miscellany, vol. i. p. 137, *Deposition of Emanuel Francisco.*

pickpocketing excursion to join the fleet of which he was in nominal command. Had he obeyed his own orders at dawn, and added the weight of his squadron to the attack, it is probable that not one of these forty galleons round Sidonia would have escaped. But by now, in spite of the devastating fire, the Armada had resumed some sort of formation, and other stray ships which had been drifting towards the Dutch coast had beaten up against the wind and joined the nucleus. The Armada was still in existence, but even now a few hours' more fighting would have rendered it helpless, had not the English ammunition given out: once again a miserable parsimony had caused the full sheaf of victory to be left unsickled. Already the fight had taken the Spanish ships past Dunkirk; the junction with Parma was no longer possible, and had powder and shot not been lacking, that day or the next must have seen their final destruction. Then about three in the afternoon came up a squall of blinding violence from the west, and when it had passed the Armada had disengaged itself, but with the stress of the strong wind it was gradually edging nearer and nearer to the shoals along the Dutch coast. Many of the galleons were still efficient for sailing and for battle: others, with shattered masts and riven sails, fluttered like a flock of broken-winged birds towards what seemed their certain doom. Though none of those proud ships would be brought in triumph of trumpets and pealing bells into the port of London, they would be battered to bits by the rising sea as they grounded on the banks, and surrender not to man but to the immutable judgments of God.

All night Drake lay to the windward on the heels of the labouring fugitives. He had managed to steal or borrow a few more rounds of shot and some scrapings of powder, but he must have thought, as he waited through the short darkness before dawn, that he need do

no more than watch the death-struggle of Spain in the strangle-hold of the wind that was pushing it on to the shoals. Already three of the galleons had dropped out of line and were drifting helpless to their doom, but he let the shoals deal with them, and followed the more seaworthy ships. Should they attempt to beat out, he was waiting to windward, ready to serve them the last dose of the bitter stuff he had given them that morning. Day dawned, windy and red, and now, seeing the lee-way of the night, Drake knew that the shoals were very near. Sidonia knew it too, for he had sounded and found but five fathoms of water, and it seemed that all was staged for the final scene of the stupendous tragedy. Then, on the lip of the catastrophe, it was averted ; the wind, which had been blowing steady out of the north-west, veered round into the south, and the Armada, ahead of the English fleet, slipped out to sea.

Drake accepted this crushing disappointment, and in the letter he wrote that day to Walsingham there is not a bitter or savage word. He recognized that it was the hand of God that had plucked the Spaniards from the jaws of annihilation, and he had nothing but thanks-giving for what had been accomplished, and trust for the future. " God give us grace to depend on Him," he wrote, " and we shall not doubt victory, for our cause is good."

With that change in the wind the might of Spain, that seemed about to be sunk for ever in the northern sea, became again a peril that must be faced. A land-ing on the coast of Scotland was still possible, and for two days more, though almost ammunitionless, Drake and Howard held on to the pursuit. Up the coast they sped before that southerly wind, till they had passed Newcastle, and then once more it veered to the west. The Spaniards could not now land in the Forth, but if there was any fight left in them they might attempt once

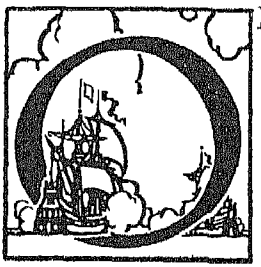
more the junction with Parma. In the English fleet provisions and water were running short, and they turned south again to revictual and guard against that possibility. The Spaniards pursued their disastrous destiny round the Orkneys, and the remnants of the Invincible Armada, crippled, and so short of water that mules and horses were thrown overboard,[1] after paying heavy toll as passport to the wild and rocky coasts, got back to the harbours from which, had not nursery diplomacy and criminal economy frustrated Drake's wise and daring policy, it would never have set forth. The English had not lost a single ship of any kind.

[1] Harleian Miscellany, vol. i. p. 138.



CHAPTER XV

THE PORTUGAL EXPEDITION



IN land meantime Elizabeth, now that the time for diplomacies was clearly past, had thrown them all aside, and, though she might still be starving her navies of powder and shot, or, at any rate, failing to make sure that they were not starved, she rose to the full possibilities of her position. Though for years she had schemed and truckled and trembled, while there was a chance of averting the supreme danger with which the realm had been menaced, now that the peril was upon her she showed herself entirely majestic, queen from top to toe. Her speech to her troops at Tilbury has been scoffed at as being bombastic, but splendid bombast like that was exactly what was required, as the event proved, to pull the nation together in a manner that no one but its Queen could have accomplished. She had been warned, so she told them, not to trust herself to armed multitudes, and her answer was, "Let tyrants fear." Though she had, by every imaginable trick, tried to make an impossible peace, she had at this crisis "the heart of a king, and of a King of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm, to which, rather than any dishonour should grow by me, I myself will take up arms. . . ." Bombast that might be, but it was absolutely sincere, and no doubt she would have

been perfectly ready to pick up a musket, then and there, and discharge it in all directions. The speech ran like fire through the land : all the nobles in England, beginning with old Viscount Montague, of the Cloth of Gold, raised troops, which they kept under arms till the shattered Armada was known to have passed beyond Scotland. Even Papists, like Richard Leigh, who was executed about this time for treason, are ungrudging in their admiration of the Queen.[1]

Drake was still not quite satisfied that the peril had passed. He thought that the Armada might intend to put in at some Danish port for repairs, and, writing to the Queen on August 8th, he expressed the view that it would not be wise to disband the fleet yet. He wrote also to Walsingham, recommending that a big naval demonstration should be made in force opposite Dunkirk, so that Parma could have a good look at what he would encounter if he attempted to put to sea : he would doubtless also observe that the Invincible Armada was not taking part in that display. But Parma had quite abandoned his very languid preparation for joining it, and having seen it stream north in battered disarray, that faint-hearted viceroy, to whose inaction the Spanish attributed the defeat of the Armada,[2] had no fancy for an unsupported adventure of his own. In the course of the next few days came news of the Armada far away to the north, and there was no need any longer to fear or provide against its return.

The danger was past, and with it faded Elizabeth's splendour. On receipt of Drake's letter, she sent an equerry to ask for an invoice of the treasure that had been taken, and wanted to know why no Spanish ships had been brought in to London. That was all she had to say, except that she wished to see the Lord High

[1] Harleian Miscellany, vol. i. p. 142.

[2] Samuel Clark, *The Spanish Invasion*, p. 58.

Admiral. If any further evidence were wanted to show that it was Drake, not he, who was regarded as having been in command of the English fleet, it can be found in the fact that Howard, before leaving for London, got Drake to "scribble a few lines" to Walsingham, to be shown to the Queen, saying that Howard's conduct had quite satisfied him.[1] The incident of a Lord High Admiral asking for a testimonial from his vice-Admiral is certainly unique, and adequately expresses the real positions of the two.

Drake had reaped the highest reward that can fall to any man. He had saved England in spite of all the diplomatic and economical obstacles that the Queen and officialdom generally had put in his way, but there were many tares in that noble harvest. He had all the defects of his qualities, and doubtless the jealousy with which he was regarded by Frobisher, Lord Henry Seymour, and others was largely the result of his openly expressed contempt for the opinion of any who disagreed with him. He was quoted by Frobisher as having said that no one had done well against the Armada except himself, and Lord Henry asked to be relieved of his command if he was to serve under Drake. He was envied and abused, adored and detested, and, while thirsty for fame and flattery, he snapped his fingers at his detractors. But all through August he was too busy to bother about Admirals, for his sailor-boys, for whom he really cared much more, were in the grip of some dire epidemic, and he and Hawkins were hard at work paying off crews that could be spared, thinning out overcrowding, and removing the sick into healthier conditions, for Her Majesty's ships were unsanitary wards for convalescents. No royal measure for the relief of these sick sailors was taken by the Queen, though as the disease-ridden remnants of his defeated Armada

[1] Barrow, *Life of Drake*, p. 312. (Drake to Walsingham.)

arrived at Santander, Philip did all in his power for their care and succour.[1]

Throughout this month and the next reliable news arrived concerning the plight of the Armada as it pursued its *via dolorosa* back to Spain. Shipwreck and sickness had been levying a heavier toll than had the ill-fed English guns, and on the Irish coast alone more galleons went ashore than had been lost in the Channel and the North Sea. The news of the irreparable disaster was spreading through Europe, though Mendoza, ex-ambassador to London, and now the King of Spain's representative in Paris, spread the most gratifying lies about a huge Spanish victory. Mendoza was a really magnificent liar: that the King of Scotland had taken the town of Berwick, that the Spanish had sunk the "Ark" and sixteen other great ships, that Drake had headed the flight of the rest, were items which he sent broadcast over Europe, and Prague was rejoicing over the landing Sidonia had made at Plymouth,[2] and Rome was cheered by similar news. But Pope Sixtus V, who had promised a million crowns to the King of Spain when Spanish troops landed in England,[3] was prudent enough to ask for more evidence, and since such evidence only made known that wrecked crews had landed on the coast of Scotland and Ireland, where they were mostly murdered, Holy Father very sensibly maintained that such landings did not count, and retained his crowns. But Mendoza's fabrications had to be exposed, and Drake wrote an admirable reply to them, published as "A Pack of Spanish Lies."[4] This document strongly tends to refute Frobisher's gossip of his boastings, for without once mentioning himself he attributes all credit to Lord Howard, saying that it was by the wise and valiant con-

[1] Monson, *Naval Tracts*, vol. i. p. 174.
[2] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 163. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 163.
[4] Barrow, *Life of Drake*, p. 317.

duct of the Lord High Admiral that the Armada had been "beaten and shuffled together" from the Lizard to Portland, from Portland to Calais, and chased out of sight of England altogether; and that "with all their terrible ostentation they did not in all their sailing round England so much as sink or take one ship, bark, pinnace or cock-boat of ours or even burn so much as one sheep-cote on this land." Early in September the truth was known in Spain, and Philip fell ill of a fever, and appeared no more in public for a while.[1] Soon it penetrated to Rome, and the intercessions held for his success were abandoned,[2] and the Vatican came to the unwelcome conclusion that Mendoza was a liar.

"So much for Mendoza," thought Drake, "but what am I to do next?" The Queen would have liked an attack on the Indian fleet to recoup her for the dreadful expense of the most glorious fortnight in English history. But Drake hated the King of Spain more than he loved gold, and as he fussed over his sick fellows in the fleet, and with Hawkins founded the "Chatham Chest" for the relief of indigent sailors, he was thinking over bigger operations than that. The defeat of the Armada, he well knew, had caused the Colossus who bestrode the world to stagger, and now as he rocked on his feet, Drake longed to topple him over altogether, and show that this imposing monster was clouts from head to foot.

He bought this autumn a seventy-one years' lease of a very fine house in London, called the Herbor in the Dowgate. Don Guerau de Spes, who had been the Spanish Ambassador in England, between Silva and Mendoza, had once occupied it, and had been confined there under arrest in one of Elizabeth's diplomatic intrigues. It had originally been a royal residence, described by Pennant "as a vast home or palace," with

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 178.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 181.

fine river-frontage and gardens.[1] Incessant singeings of the Royal beard had made Drake a rich man, he had also married an heiress, and he must have lived here in that state which he always enjoyed. But he was not born for ease, and this new adventure was seething in his head. He wanted a coadjutor for it, for it was not purely naval, and he bethought him of Sir John Norreys, that savage soldier who had served with him under Essex in Ireland, and who had been Marshal of the land-forces in England while the Armada was on the coast. Together they hatched this scheme (in many ways like the abortive project of 1581), which was to capture Lisbon and the Azores, and set Don Antonio on the throne of Portugal. But now Drake had no mind to be subject to the checks of the Queen and her ministers, and though the projected fleet was to exceed in strength that which had already met and scattered the Armada, the expedition was not to be a national one, but to be financed by a private war-syndicate. The Queen might be a shareholder, but not a director, and the supreme command would be in Drake's hands. The land-force was to be as efficient as the fleet and to include a siege-train, cavalry, and English and Walloon infantry.

The Queen's consent and co-operation were secured in October 1588, and though, as soon as that was done, she began to hedge and make difficulties, and hold back the ships which she had promised, Drake and Norreys between them cajoled and managed her so well that in March 1589 they hoisted their flags at Dover, and sailed off to join the general concentration at Plymouth. Very opportunely, since transports were still lacking, there came rolling down the Channel that day sixty-five nice new Dutch merchantmen, and Drake annexed them all, for they were handy ships. At Plymouth there was a

[1] Lady Eliott Drake, *Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake*, vol. i. p. 107.

rush of volunteers to the naval and military standards, and before the end of March there was ready to start for the coast of Spain a fleet of one hundred and eighty vessels, six of which, ships of the Royal Navy, were the Queen's contribution, the flagship being the "Revenge": all carried full crews and troops to the number of at least 16,000. In addition to these six ships, namely, the "Revenge," the "Nonpareil," the "Dreadnought," the "Swiftsure," the "Foresight," and the "Aid," the Queen also subscribed £20,000 in cash. Five months, now that Drake was not being constantly tripped up in official red-tape and distracted by the Queen's whims, had been enough to furnish and set on its way the largest expedition that had ever left English shores.

The first attempt at a start was not prosperous: contrary winds forced the fleet back into the Sound, where it lay for another fortnight, and fresh provisioning was necessary. During this delay there came a wild despatch from the Queen saying that her pretty Essex had run away, and that if he had joined the fleet (as Sir Philip Sidney had done on a previous occasion) he must be returned at once. A reassuring message was sent back by Drake that he was not secreting the ungrateful favourite, which was true as far as it went, but it did not go very far. Essex, as Drake must have known, had already made his escape, and was now at sea with Sir Roger Williams, on the "Swiftsure," which had hastily put out again, apparently in anticipation of Gloriana sending after him. He was heavily in debt, the Queen had already once paid up for him, and he would not ask her again, and thus increase her intolerable claim to scold and pet him. So Drake said that he had not got Essex, but that unless the Queen sent orders for a month's further provisions, the expedition could not start, and he would be forced to land twenty thousand hungry men at Plymouth. Though hugging her money-

bags the Queen consented, and after this small farcical prologue, the curtain went up and the fleet set forth again.

Drake had consented to begin business by smashing up the remnants of last year's Armada, and spoiling the constructive work on a new one, which was supposed to be in preparation at Santander : Gloriana wanted no more Armadas. After that would come the capture of Lisbon (which Drake had not attempted on his last raid on the Spanish coasts), with a view to putting Don Antonio on the throne of Portugal. Don Antonio was still only a pawn, but he would become a royal piece, if Portugal rose in his favour. He himself was certainly confident of success, for he guaranteed that Portugal would be his within a week of his landing, and before leaving England made an amazing contract with the Government, promising to pay Elizabeth 5,000,000 ducats for the expense of the expedition two months after the taking of Lisbon, and an annual tribute thereafter of 300,000 ducats. He bound himself to fill all bishoprics with English Catholics, to garrison all forts and castles throughout Portugal with English soldiers, and to join with the Queen in any fleet she might equip at Lisbon against Spain. Such terms would reduce Portugal to the status of an English province, and incredible though they sound, several independent sources agree in the existence of this treaty. Besides, Don Antonio who, as we have seen, was quite possibly only the son of a Lisbon merchant, had nothing to lose, and it would be more agreeable to be King of Portugal under these conditions than to be nobody.[1]

The programme was elastic, as all Drake's programmes were, but the destruction of past and future Armadas was an essential first item, the establishment of Don

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 196; and Monson's *Naval Tracts*, vol. i. p. 191.

Antonio the second, and after that the fleet might perch on the Azores and swoop down on the treasure-ships from the Indies. Drake found reason to think, however, that Corunna rather than Santander was the real point of concentration for the King's new fleet, and so he steered his course there, entered the harbour at night, and, following the plan that had succeeded so well at Cartagena and San Domingo, landed Norreys and his troops. The lower town and the harbour were taken without any serious defence being made, enormous quantities of stores fell into their hands, and also the "San Juan," a galleon which had fought in the Armada, with several other ships of war. But the military operations, designed to take the whole town, were unsuccessful owing to the absence of a siege-train which Elizabeth had promised, but forgotten (or not) to supply. An attempt to open a breach in the walls by mining only buried a number of the English troops, and a large force of Spaniards, amounting to nine thousand men, established themselves in the rear of the English lines. Norreys drove them off in rout and disorder, and, after setting fire to the lower town and burning and destroying crops and windmills, the land forces re-embarked. Though the town still stood, the damage inflicted had been enormous, and that always pleased Drake, when the property concerned was the King of Spain's. He wrote in high feather to Walsingham, saying, "We have done the King of Spain many pretty services at this place, and yet I believe he will not thank us." But in truth the exploit was not very pretty: the undisciplined English troops under Norreys were clearly out of hand, and rioting, continual drunkenness, and probably massacre, rendered the operations singularly discreditable.

So Corunna and the capture of the ships there "counted" for the attack on Santander, which the Queen had insisted on, and Drake moved his fleet south to attack Lisbon

at once and establish Don Antonio there. Could this be effected there were good hopes of a general Portuguese rising, and that would be an immense stroke, no small barber's operation on The Beard, but a blow that might send Spain toppling. Norreys concurred, and as they beat southwards in the face of contrary winds, what should they sight but the "Swiftsure," with Sir Roger Williams and Essex on board? They had taken several prizes, which was a pleasant hearing, and Drake seemed quite to forget that he was under orders to send Essex home to his mistress if he came across him. The "Swiftsure," besides, could not be spared; she took up her place in the fleet, and the plans for the capture of Lisbon were hatched on the "Revenge."

It was a big undertaking, and Drake's scheme, as usual, was to make a combined attack by land and sea. The point selected for the landing of the soldiers was a small unfortified town called Peniché, fifty miles north of Lisbon: the harbour was protected by a castle. On May 16th, 1589, the fleet swooped down in front of the harbour and anchored. Two landing-parties, the first under Essex, the second under Sir Roger Williams, were put on shore; they charged and drove off the Spanish troops who opposed them, and after a brilliant little hand-to-hand action, took the town. The garrison in the castle was Portuguese, and surrendered to the name of Don Antonio. That looked well for the general rising.

As a preliminary to the capture of Lisbon, this landing and the securing of a base was sound enough, but the main problem was very different from that which Drake had solved so correctly at Cartagena. There his ships and soldiers were in close touch with each other, and could combine in attack and afford mutual support, but here a march of fifty miles lay before the troops and more than fifty miles of sea before the fleet. They would

be out of touch with each other's advance the whole time : the fleet might be delayed by bad weather, or the troops by serious opposition, and no accurate synchronization of movement was possible. Furthermore, till both were successful in an arduous task, the one in taking the town, the other in forcing its way past the formidable forts and batteries on the Tagus, they would be like two loose ends of string, instead of being firmly knotted together. There was urgent need also of swift progress, for both troops and crews were suffering from a rapidly spreading sickness, and they were none too efficient for their sundered tasks. But Drake, to all seeming, was as confident as ever, went up the hillside with the troops, waved Norreys a gay God-speed, and hastened back to get the fleet moving. Don Antonio accompanied Norreys, convinced that Portugal would behave just like Peniché.

Four days later, having of course heard nothing in the interval of his land-force, Drake and his fleet sailed straight into the little harbour of Cascaes, just outside the heavily-fortified entrance to the Tagus. Three forts guarded the channel to Lisbon harbour, St. Julian, St. Francis, and Belem, of which St. Julian was held to be the strongest marine fortress in Europe.[1] The terror of Drake's name caused Cascaes to be at once abandoned, but the Portuguese inhabitants returned on his assurance that he was come to establish Don Antonio on the throne : the castle, with a Spanish garrison, did not surrender. That mattered little ; it was small and isolated, and he could blow it to bits if he chose : his business was not with it, but with Lisbon.

It is reasonable to wonder whether during those four days a little cloud had not arisen from the sea, no bigger at present than a man's hand, but pregnant with calamity. Drake must have foreseen that which now manifested

[1] Monson's *Naval Tracts*, vol. i. p. 179.

itself, namely the inherent weakness of this sundered attack. There was no use in attempting the great hazard, which he had refused to undertake before, of storming his way past the three forts of the Tagus and occupying the harbour, till he knew that Norreys had arrived, and was ready to co-operate. If he was not yet here, the capture of the harbour, which was bound to be difficult, would be absolutely ineffective, for Drake could not possibly hold it if the land force was not launching a simultaneous counter-attack on the town and castle. Again, if the wind was favourable (*i.e.* west by south) for passing the three forts that guarded the approach to the harbour, and Norreys had not arrived, Drake would be obliged to evacuate the harbour again, and repass the forts with the wind against him, a hazardous if not an impossible operation, unless an attack was being made on them from the land. In a word, even if he managed to reach the harbour, he would be helpless there unless Norreys's land-attack synchronized with his, and he had no idea where Norreys was. He therefore did the best thing possible, and remaining at Cascaes, he sent out scouts to find out if Norreys was within striking distance of Lisbon. On that day the wind was favourable for his rush up the Tagus, but before his scouts came back with their news, it had changed, and for the present the attack from the sea was impossible.

Norreys, meantime, since parting with the fleet at Peniché, had been marching on Lisbon without encountering any great opposition. But less promising was the fact that Don Antonio's presence failed to excite the smallest enthusiasm among the Portuguese : the pawn was likely to remain a pawn. He reached Lisbon two days after Drake had sent out scouts from Cascaes, and when they returned to Drake, they brought the news that Norreys had established himself in the outskirts of the town, but that Don Antonio was still no

attraction. To Norreys there were no signs of Drake attacking from the sea, and his men, riddled with sickness, were thoroughly discouraged. On the news, however, that Norreys was in place, Drake gave orders for the naval attack to be made the moment the wind rendered it possible. His council of captains, now knowing the appalling difficulty of the attempt, were solidly opposed to it, but Drake would hear nothing of that : he had to carry out his part of the job. Norreys was there, and by God the fleet should co-operate, and not leave him in the lurch. That evening the wind veered to the right quarter, and Drake ordered the ships he had detailed for the attack to take up their positions just outside the estuary, and at daybreak to follow the "Revenge," on which he was to lead the attack. Before dawn a message arrived from Norreys that in the entire absence of any co-operation from the Portuguese, his task of taking the town was hopeless, and that he was marching to join the fleet at Cascaes.

Drake's great project of capturing Lisbon and holding it as a naval base in the enemy's country had failed, and the cause of the failure was the absence of touch between land and sea. Had Norreys held on, trusting Drake, the chances are that the Admiral would have succeeded in joining hands with him, for the task of getting an effective body of ships past the forts appeared to him to be feasible with a favourable wind, and he knew far better than anybody else what he could do. On the other hand, it is difficult to blame Norreys : his troops were sick and tired, and Don Antonio's promise that all Portugal would rise in his favour within a week of his arrival with an English Armada had proved mere pie-crust. Gloomy indeed must have been the meeting at Cascaes and the re-embarkation of the land-force, for the great project had completely failed, stores were short, the troops and the crews were in the grip of a serious epidemic of dysentery,

and it was useless in any case to renew an attempt in which surprise and unexpectedness were necessary for success. The only question was what the next move was to be.

It was difficult to hit upon a project that appealed to both the military and naval representatives on the Council, for without doubt the complete fiasco at Lisbon had caused friction, and the bond of brotherhood between soldiers and sailors had been loosened. Nothing would succeed unless that was firmly knit ; Drake had known that years ago in dark days at St. Julian. But his luck had not deserted him, for just now, when sickness and lack of provisions were creating a serious situation, there came within sight a big lot of ships evidently making for Lisbon. He instantly rounded them up, and found himself in possession of a Hanseatic fleet laden with goods and raw material for Philip's new Armada : a distinctly cheerful happening. Sixty new vessels thus fell into his hands, and he turned some of them into hospital-ships for his sick. Next day a missing convoy of stores from England turned up also, with a red-hot letter from the Queen, who had heard that Essex had joined the fleet, demanding his immediate return with his wicked seducer, Sir Roger Williams. Poor Essex was therefore sent back to be slapped and petted, but Drake frankly told the Queen that the other felon could not be spared.

Things looked a little brighter, and it was agreed to carry out the third item of the programme, and make a raid on the Azores. But before the fleet was under way, a squadron of galleys put out from the Tagus, and captured four small vessels, which had drifted apart from the rest. The loss in itself was insignificant, but never before had Drake lost a single ship that was in his charge, and the shadow of his eclipse encroached further. To add to this misfortune, a furious gale sprang up from

the south ; it raged for a week, and the ships were widely scattered. But the weather had previously been so unsettled that Drake had given an alternative rendezvous at Vigo, if the wind made the Azores an impossible gathering-place, and he, with Sir John Norreys aboard the "Revenge," arrived there with three squadrons, more or less, of the scattered fleet. He had to wait for the rest to reassemble, and the best occupation was to burn Vigo, which he accordingly did. The project of a raid and a base in the Azores, with a golden harvestry of treasure-ships, still held. They were in need of what Drake called "some little comfortable dew from Heaven."

A large number of ships had never turned up at Vigo, though the smoke of its burning was a fine guide. Many others were full of sick men, and these would be a mere encumbrance to the swift movement of an efficient force. A rousing success was the only thing that could now redeem this expedition from complete failure : also, he had disobeyed several of the Queen's direct orders, and he might expect a cold (if not a hot) reception on his return, if he came empty-handed. But there was one sure palliation for every offence in Gloriana's eyes, and to be able to bring her a pleasant little statement of her share in the loot would be a guarantee of her forgiveness and applause. Hitherto the credit side of her account-book was blank except for her portion in the capture of the Hanseatic fleet, which, when sold, would not suffice to pay her anything like a satisfactory dividend on her investment. Then, too, there was adventure to tempt him, and the memory of the rollicking days when with a handful of Devon boys he had captured cities and treasure trains and had come home up the Sound, sailing heavily by reason of the precious ballast. But there was no use in burdening himself with half-manned ships and invalid crews, and it was arranged that Norreys (for the next act would be wholly naval) should take the unfit and the

superfluous back to England, while Drake, with twenty efficient vessels, went off to try his luck on the golden road that led from Nombre de Dios to Spain.

Sheltering among the Bayona islands Drake picked his ships and the crews to man them. Some were the lately captured Hanseatic vessels, which had been built as men-of-war to be armed in Spain, and the rest he sent home. He must have felt much relieved to see them go, for this great fleet of a hundred and eighty sail, though in keeping with his big ideas, had been a heavy disappointment. Brilliant as he was as leader, the greatest of his gifts was his personal inspiration, and he had not gripped that huge Armada nor handled it with the success that had been invariably his when his spirit and influence were felt by every man on board. Unfettered and able to follow swiftly the inspiration of his own genius, he could do more with a small fleet than any living man with a large fleet, and perhaps he himself was only handicapped by the size of his command. A rapier in his hand did better work than a sledge-hammer. Swift movement and lightning thrusts were his speciality: his wrist had been weighted by the heavier weapon, and the quickness of his brain hampered by the sense that he had not welded captains and crews and troops into himself. Perhaps, too, his own quickness was beginning to fail, and the irresistible quality of his youth, which had once made light of every difficulty, and plucked success out of disaster, to grow less buoyant. That fiasco at Lisbon could scarce have happened to Drake in his heyday, or, if it had, it would have been swiftly overscored by some meteor-like improvisation which would have gilded it with triumph. What he could have done we do not know, but young Drake would have known.

The short and melancholy sequel confirms the view that the magic mirror was beginning to grow dim. He started westward for the Azores, and now, when once

more a storm of prodigious violence scattered his smaller squadron, Drake gave up the project altogether. It is possible, but by no means certain, that the "Revenge" sprang so bad a leak that a further voyage was out of the question. That would account for Drake's not keeping the rendezvous at the Azores, but the evidence is by no means conclusive.[1] Possibly this second dispersal of the fleet made him realize that the remnant of his dispirited expedition would not be staunch enough for it, and he doubted his power of inspiring. Though the squadron under William Fenner, Captain of the "Aid," was missing, Drake sailed straight back to Plymouth. Many of his captains arriving in advance of him in English waters, and believing that he would certainly make for Plymouth, put in at other harbours, and disposed of the Hanseatic ships to private owners. On July 1st, 1589, the "Revenge" came up the Sound alone and treasureless. No whisper went round the church that day at service-time that Drake was home again, and the "Revenge" with a crew that received no more than its bare pay, took up her moorings unwelcomed. Lisbon was untaken, Don Antonio uncrowned, and Drake discredited.

[1] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. II p. 256, note.

CHAPTER XVI

DRAKE'S FALL AND RECOVERY



DRAKE'S Armada had failed; that failure was wine to his enemies, and they plied the Queen with it. He had disobeyed her orders to go to Santander, he had failed before Lisbon, he had given up the capture of the Azores, and, as crowning crime, he was not ballasted with gold from treasure-ships. He was guilty on all these counts, and though he had burned half Corunna and all Vigo, had destroyed an enormous quantity of stores, and taken sixty ships which were intended for a new Armada, nothing made up for the lack of loot. It was a rare opportunity for all those who, like Frobisher, Lord Henry Seymour and Lord Howard, were frankly jealous of the first seaman of the age, to whom had been entrusted a larger fleet than ever Lord Howard had titularly commanded, and they all joined in the yelp. No allowance was made for the stupendous difficulties he had encountered, for the lack of proper artillery and siege-train the Queen had promised, for the terrible sickness which had played havoc with the efficiency of his troops and crews. Though Elizabeth, in consequence of what he had accomplished, could sleep without dreaming of new Armadas on their way, and though often before he had made her Danae to his showers of gold, had chased the might of Spain off her coasts without the loss of a single ship, and had inflicted more damage on her enemy than

the rest of her sea-captains combined, she put him straight into the blackest of her books, and from the date of his return in this summer of 1589 until the end of 1592 she refused even to consider giving the conqueror of the Armada any command at sea. She had lost her investment in his last cruise, and nothing that he had hitherto done could atone for that.

Drake seems to have accepted the situation without remonstrance. He knew (no one better) how many enemies his past triumphs and, not less, his own dictatorial intolerance of opposition, had raised against him. For the present they were in power, and bitter though it must have been to know that Hawkins was being commissioned to fit out a blockading expedition against the Spanish ports, while Frobisher made a raid on the Azores with Drake's " Revenge " for flagship, he bided his time, and after clearing himself in an enquiry held on his and Norreys's command in this last voyage, he retired to Plymouth and private life. He had lately bought from Sir Richard Grenville the neighbouring manor and estate of Buckland Abbey, and there he betook himself with his drum and his wife. That suited the King of Spain admirably, for though Drake's Armada had been officially pronounced a failure in London, the failure had been an expensive one for Philip, since it had involved the sack of Corunna and Vigo, and the loss of a large number of ships. He must have been pleased to think that no more similar failures were to be feared at present, and with a sense of comparative security he set about reorganizing the fleets that brought treasure from the Indies. The sea-dragon whom he feared more than all the rest of the English admirals put together, was chained up on land, and for this relief he gave his Sister of England much thanks.

But Drake in his tent on shore was no sulking Achilles. Land was not a proper place for a man to live on, but his

beloved Plymouth was the least objectionable spot on *terra firma*, and, though debarred from the sea, he was allowed to employ himself on fortification-work for the port, which the Government had ordered, and to which he contributed £100.[1] Plymouth was in need, too, not only of fortifications, but of a proper water-supply, for at present all water, when cisterns were not replenished with rain, had to be carried into the town in carts and buckets from the distance of a mile, and ships coming into the harbour to water must send out for it. Drake took this in hand also, and made a contract with the corporation to bring to a reservoir, constructed just outside the town, the water of the Meavy from eight miles away on the moors, and thence to lay it on into the town through pipes. This was a considerable engineering feat, for the lie of the ground necessitated detours which trebled the direct distance: there were bogs to be drained, and rocks to be blasted, and on its way it reinforced itself with an affluent stream. Where its course ran steep, he erected flour-mills, and it seems certain that he bore the greater part of the expense himself, for the corporation only contributed £350.[2] The first sod of this leat was cut in December 1590 and it was completed in April of the next year. Then when all was ready for the induction of the water, he arranged one of the ceremonious scenes he loved. He and the Mayor and Corporation in the red robes which he, in his own mayoralty, had ordained must be worn on official occasions, went out to welcome the water to the town, and marched ahead of their liquid guest as it flowed down the conduits,[3] amid the rejoicings of the populace. We picture him, pleased as a boy with this pomp, drinking

[1] Lady Elliott Drake, *Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake*, vol. i. p. 109.

[2] Barrow, *Life of Drake*, p. 419.

[3] Southey, *British Admirals*, vol. iii. p. 204.

the Mayor's health in the water, and vowing with many oaths that he had never tasted so fine a draught. The water which still supplies Plymouth comes from the same source as Drake's, and in many places on the hills behind the town there are remains of his original conduit, which ran open to the air, though now the water is brought in underground pipes. Even to this day this gift of his to the town is annually commemorated at the "Fyshynge Feaste" on April 30th. On that day, after an inspection of the water-works, the Town Council assembles at the Head Weir, and a goblet of water is drawn and handed to the Mayor by the chairman of the Water Committee, who asks him to drink to the pious memory of Sir Francis Drake. After the Mayor has drunk the assembled company do the same.[1]

For the present, then, owing to jealousies and ingratitudes and his own failure, Drake was on a lee-shore. He could busy himself over the fortifications of Plymouth and over engineering a water-supply, but these were mere toys for the passing of idle days, and gave no outlet to his volcanic energy; and when he had played with them there was nothing left for him but to hang up his drum at Buckland Abbey, and sit to have his portrait painted. And all the time his genius was beginning to burn itself out in this desert of domesticity: a wickeder waste was never made. News came sometimes which made it flare up, but it was without the fuel of action which alone could really feed it. The temperament of fire which was his is not fulfilled in idleness, which merely damps it down as with wet cinders; it prospers only when stoked with hazard and adventure. There was the King of Spain reorganizing the convoys of his Indian trade, and building a fleet for its protection at Havana, and Drake, who could have played the deuce with that, was walking with my lady in her flower-garden,

[1] *Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake*, vol. i. p. 111.

twitching and fidgeting and cursing as he thought of old days on the "Swan." Then the King of Spain was busy concentrating a new fleet at Corunna, with which he meant to seize the ports of Brittany, and establish there a naval base that would menace the narrow seas, and Drake smote off the heads of my lady's best blooms as he thought of what he had done at Cadiz. Even worse was it to know that the Government which would not employ him had commissioned an expedition to carry out the type of raid which he had invented: a rare mess Hawkins and Frobisher and others, who had got the recipe of the wizard's spell but lacked the compelling wand of his genius, were making of it! Hawkins and Frobisher accomplished nothing: they sailed for the Azores, and then they just came back again. So Lord Thomas Howard was tried to see if he could get hold of the treasure-ships for which Elizabeth was starving. Sir Richard Grenville, from whom Drake had bought Buckland Abbey, was his vice-Admiral on the "Revenge," and how willingly would Drake have reinstated him here, if only he could take his place on the ship that answered his hand like a horse which knows its rider, and on which he had ridden down the Invincible Armada.

But when the tragic and splendid tale of what Sir Richard had done came down to Plymouth, Drake forgot the gnawing ache of his idleness a while, for never had there been so heroic an adventure. The "Revenge" had been cut off from the fleet in the middle of a Spanish squadron, and all day and night she fought them, and four of them she sank. Her bulwarks and defences were demolished by the rain of shot, and Grenville was mortally wounded, but he fought on till not an ounce of powder remained. As he lay dying on deck, he told his gunner to hew open the timbers of the ship and sink her, but before that was done the Spaniards had boarded and carried him on to their flagship where, with chivalrous

reverence for so stout a soul and so fine a foe, they tended his last moments. To his obsequies there hurried the mightiest gale that ever blew, and plunged into his sea-sepulchre not the "Revenge" alone, but a hundred ships of Spain.

During these three years when Drake was in the outer darkness of disgrace, Elizabeth's eyes were opened, and she saw that though an occasional success against treasure-ships fattened her exchequer, dusk was already falling on the English sea-power which under Drake had begun to dawn. The sea-birds of Spain were daily increasing in strength and numbers now that no one had Drake's secret of how to strike at their nests on Spanish coasts, and at the harbours that hatched them. Her captains now and then winged one of the fledglings, but the eyries and breeding-places were unravaged, and their menace began to cast its shadow over the narrow English seas. Already Philip had established a base in Brittany: he had learned the bitter lesson of the Armada, that swift and mobile craft were the masters of his slow-moving forts, and he was feverishly building a fleet of such. Suddenly it burst on the Queen how great the danger was becoming, and in the autumn of 1592 she summoned Drake from the disgrace that was disgraceful only to those who were responsible for it, and he was not among them. He reopened his fine house in the Dowgate, and his star, which the envious had thought was set for ever, shot up again into the zenith of the Royal favour. Once again there was nobody like Drake in the Queen's eyes, and he gave her his new picture-book, illustrated by himself in his idleness, concerning the voyage to the Spanish Main. She seems to have lost it.

Parliament met in February 1593, and in consequence of Drake's representations to the Queen a vote of £200,000 for the Navy was asked. As member for Plymouth he spoke on the great and growing danger of

Spanish sea-power, and after a long debate this sum, immense for that day, was voted. Instantly rumour began to spread that Drake was going to sea again.[1] But it seems clear that the expedition to the Indies, on which he left England for his last voyage, was not then in contemplation; the grant was not voted with that end in view, but to defend the coasts and narrow seas against the Spanish menace in Brittany. As early as 1591, Walsingham, as is shown by the Queen's speech to Parliament after the granting of this vote,[2] had seen how real this danger was, and an intercepted letter from him to Elizabeth shows how gravely he took it even then. The Duke de Mercœur was head of the Catholic party in Brittany, and was inviting Spanish help against the Protestants,[3] and Philip since then had been busily establishing himself at Brest with the purpose of keeping there a fleet which would be an intolerable and constant danger to English shipping. Warnings, moreover, were arriving from English agents in Spain of the rapid growth of the navy there, and this vote was to be applied to corresponding preparation in England, and not to fit out a raid on the Indies. Before the end of 1593 the Spanish had made good their occupation of Brest and had landed troops. Frobisher was sent out with a fleet in the ensuing summer to prevent the arrival of fresh Spanish reinforcements, and in the autumn of 1594 Norreys conducted a military expedition to the relief of Brest in conjunction with the fleet. After severe fighting it was successful, and Brest was cleared of Spanish troops. In the simultaneous naval action Frobisher was mortally wounded, and died within a few hours.

This capture of Brest from the Spanish, though it has received little attention from historians, was extremely

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 247.
[2] Harleian Miscellany, vol. i. p. 436.
[3] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 223.

important, for it put an end for the present to any serious menace in home waters. The Queen could listen now to Drake's urgent advocacy of the renewal of that delightful game of raiding treasure-ships, and of harrying the coasts of the Spanish Main. During these two years since the beam of Royal approval shone on him again, Elizabeth had been of sound judgment in refusing to weaken home defence while those Spanish hornets were busy at Brest. Now the nest was smoked out, and early in 1595 Drake got her consent to make ready for one of the old buccaneering scampers.

It will always be uncertain whether Drake could have renewed his youth again, and brought off once more such a series of brilliant recklessnesses as those which had apotheosized piracy. Conditions had changed out there, as he was to find; the Spanish fear of him had been the beginning of wisdom, and in those wasted years of his disgrace they had established defensive systems. Perhaps, too, the penumbra of age which already had invaded his bright disk had now too far eclipsed it; but whether that was so or not, the brightness of it had always lain in unhampered improvisation. Now that was denied him, for the Queen, in a disastrous and characteristic fit of caution, insisted that Sir John Hawkins, now well over seventy years old,[1] and the very last man who should have served with Drake, should be in joint command with him. What made the appointment the more surprising was that Sir John was in her bad books. The command of his last expedition with Frobisher had been thoroughly ineffective, and when, in a fit of singularly unwise resignation at his ill-success, he had told the Queen that "Paul planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase," she had screamed out, "God's death! this fool went out a soldier and came home a divine." It was a great pity, indeed, that in the spirit

[1] He was born, according to Hakluyt, about 1520.

of that rude but just observation she did not give him some chaplaincy, or that she did not recall the disaster that had befallen Drake and Hawkins at San Juan d'Ulua, when last they had sailed together for the Indies. The old man was past the age of foresight and swift decision, and his long and splendid record of service should have been closed.

But Drake was to take the sea again, and the glamour of that magic name was enough to bring a surfeit of volunteers flocking to his flag, while abroad the prospect of the Indian fleet soon to sail for Spain was regarded as particularly gloomy.[1] Already the Spanish exchequer was on the verge of bankruptcy; it could not pay the enormous sums due to business firms for supplying materials and equipping ships until the gold arrived from Peru, and on the mere news that the Terror was off westwards again, a moratorium was declared.[2] Had the Queen allowed Drake to set off at once without poor Hawkins, for the improvised adventure that precisely suited his genius, the first convoys now moving from Panama, when the winter rains were over, would probably never have reached Spain. Instead, the merest rumours, utterly unsubstantiated by any reliable information, that another Armada was preparing to sail for England, was sufficient to set her atremble again, and, though by the beginning of May 1595 all was ready, she suddenly forbade Drake to sail. She felt more comfortable with him at home; she had the jumps.

Indeed, the legend that good Queen Bess was the inspiration of her great captains must perish: she was never their inspiration, but always their despair. Drake had sold the lease of his fine house in the Dowgate in order to invest in this cruise,[3] fondly supposing that the Queen had gone too far to draw back. She had approved

[1] *Fugger News-Letters* (second series), p. 264. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 262.
[3] *Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake*, vol. i. p. 124.

his admirable plan of making a dash on the Isthmus, taking Panama, and cutting off all supplies of gold from Spain, and he had promised to be back again before there could be the slightest possibility of a new Armada being ready. She was a big shareholder, too, in the expedition, having furnished it with six ships of the Royal Navy, and she had made an excellent appointment for the command of the land forces in Sir Thomas Baskerville, who had highly distinguished himself at Brest, and here she was again whimpering in a corner! For two months more, while the crews and troops who had signed on munched the victuals provided for the voyage, her tremors continued, but in July she felt a little stronger and said they might put to sea. While the weather of the Royal mind was so unsettled, there was clearly no time to be lost, and Drake dashed down to Plymouth with the Navy ships to collect fresh victuals and make the long-delayed start. But before he could be off a fresh incident occurred which caused the Queen's reviving courage to suffer the most desperate relapse. Four Spanish galleys made a raid on the Cornish coast, landed troops just beyond Newlyn, and burned Penzance and some neighbouring villages. The raiders seem to have thought that Drake's expedition had sailed, but on hearing that it was now ready at Plymouth to put to sea they re-embarked with the utmost possible speed in terror of the Terror.

The effect of this raid on the Queen was quite deplorable. She sent down orders to Plymouth that the expedition, instead of sailing to the Indies, should first cruise on the Irish coast to make sure that no landing was intended there, and then proceed to the coast of Spain and convince itself that no immediate danger need be feared from that quarter. If all was perfectly quiet (but not otherwise) they might carry out the original project. In other words, the Queen proposed to use the ships, crews, troops,

and stores provided in the main by money belonging to the shareholders to do the work of the Navy. Never before had she woven timidity and economy into so Elizabethan a fabric : this plan would save her purse and comfort her quakings.

Drake and Baskerville protested, and the Queen lost her temper. It is probable that the expedition would never have sailed at all, had not the most medicinal news suddenly come to hand. Though a precious West Indian fleet had already reached Spain safely (which, had it not been for the Royal timidity in May, it might never have done), one treasure-ship, with an enticing cargo of gold, had been left behind for repairs at San Juan de Porto Rico. Elizabeth's mouth began to water : she felt she could swallow again, and with the final order that the fleet must visit the Spanish coast first, and be back before Philip could frighten her, she let them go. Only six ships of the Navy were engaged, so that Elizabeth had practically the whole of the English sea-power to protect her, and we can best account for these almost insane seizures of fear by the supposition that it was Drake whom she was so unwilling to let go. She did him justice at last : she saw that none of her other sea-captains, great though they were, could compare with him.

CHAPTER XVII

DRAKE GOES WEST



O for the last time Drake's flag was flying and his drum beating, and, on the deck of the "Defiance," sister-ship to the beloved "Revenge," he felt, after six land-locked years, the sweet lift of the sea. Young Whitlocke, who had been his page on the last voyage to the Spanish coasts, was with him again : it is likely that he had lived with him during the intervening years in the childless house of Buckland Abbey. He was grown now to the verge of manhood, fair and tall and flaxen-haired, a breezy, handsome fellow, gay and reckless, the type of youth with whom, over twenty years ago, Drake had done the rollicking deeds on the Spanish Main which he was now revisiting.

The fleet sailed on August 28th, 1595, twenty-seven sail, with crews and troops amounting in all to 2500. As if in presage of disaster, the "Hope," which carried Sir Thomas Baskerville, struck on the rocks of the Eddystone. She was got off without much damage on the flow of the tide, and they laid a course for the Spanish coast, in obedience to the Queen's timidities.

Almost immediately the folly of this joint command with Sir John Hawkins, in which were yoked together Drake's fiery soul and a mind cautious and tired and old, began to manifest itself. Friction had already developed

between them before the expedition started, for as Captain Thomas Maynarde (a soldier whose account we follow) picturesquely puts it, "Hawkins entered into matters with so leaden a foot that the other's meat would be eaten before his spit could come to the fire," and hardly had they got to sea when there were more differences between them at council meetings about the victualling of the fleet, and "choleric speeches" passed.[1] Drake was always a bad commissariat Admiral: he left that to others, and now it appeared that he had 300 more men to feed than had Hawkins, on the same supply of rations. Hawkins would have made some arrangement, but first Drake must "entreat him," and Drake never entreated anybody except God.

Then came a more acute disagreement about an attack on the Canaries, where it was necessary to water the fleet before the Atlantic voyage. Drake, who proposed it, was supported by Baskerville, but Hawkins was strongly opposed to it. "The fire which lay hid in their stomachs began to break forth," and though the matter was patched up at a pacificatory dinner on Hawkins's ship, the "Garland," by Hawkins yielding, the incompatibility of two such controlling minds was only damped down for the time. The Queen's delays, moreover, were already bearing bitter fruit, for news of the expedition had reached Spain three weeks before it left Plymouth, and when they arrived opposite Las Palmas it was to find the only landing-place barricaded, and troops prepared to repulse them. Baskerville undertook to capture the place in four days, but now it was clear that the better speed they made to the West Indies the more hopeful was the chance that they would be unexpected, and Drake refused to waste time. Without attempting a landing they moved to the west of the island, where they watered, and on September 28th set

[1] Hakluyt Society: Maynarde, *Sir Francis Drake: his Voyage*, p. 6.

forth on the voyage from which neither he nor Hawkins were to return.

A month later they were nearing Martinique, and, had they only known it, there had been following them across the Atlantic, just out of sight, five Spanish frigates which were bound for San Juan de Porto Rico on precisely the same mission as the English, namely, to take on board the bullion from the disabled treasure-ship, of which the thought had proved so timely a tonic to Elizabeth. By a stroke of the bitterest ill-luck, when the English fleet was within a couple of days' sail from the rendezvous at Guadeloupe, a series of storms scattered it, and two small merchant-vessels lagged behind the rest. They were overhauled by the Spanish frigates, and one of them, the "Francis," was taken: the "Delight," a Bristol ship, after being chased within sight of the fleet, which had now collected again, escaped, and brought news of this disastrous capture. What was even more disastrous was that Don Pedro Tello de Guzman, who commanded the Spanish frigates, had seen them, and now knew that an English fleet was in these waters.

Drake instantly and, of course, correctly divined that the whole success of the first objective (namely, the capture of this disabled treasure-ship) was toppling, and that swift action alone could save it. The prisoners of the "Francis," under torture, would reveal the destination and purpose of the English, and the frigates would make all speed for Porto Rico with the news and fortify the harbour. Now, more tragically than before, the monstrous folly of the joint command was proved, for while Drake insisted that the only chance of success was to forestall the alarm, Hawkins was for getting the big guns in place, and setting up the pinnaces, so as to be in fighting trim. He was old and tired and unfit when he left England, and on the news of the capture of the

"Francis," his nerve and health alike suffered a complete breakdown, though with the querulous obstinacy of the sick he stuck to his disastrous policy. Out of compassion for his old kinsman, Drake, "being loth to breed him further disquiet," yielded. Meantime, Guzman, exactly as he had foreseen, had tortured the information out of the hapless crew of the "Francis," and the five Spanish frigates were in full sail for San Juan. He arrived there, and reported that an English expedition of twenty-five ships, with 3000 infantry and 10,500 sailors, under command of Drake,[1] were close at hand. The prodigious exaggeration of the figures was a tribute to the Terror.

Now, Drake's yielding like this is psychologically puzzling. He knew that to outsail the frigates and bring off a surprise attack was the only chance of getting the treasure-ship, and when the success of this first objective of the expedition was probably at stake, it was exceedingly unlike him to give way for sentimental reasons. It is impossible, in fact, not to wonder whether dusk was not falling thick on the bright mirror of his superb self-confidence, and to see in his yielding the "Kismet" of a declining vitality. His hands had been tied by this joint command, and he made no real effort to break his bonds, but acquiesced, instead of bawling down all opposition, as was his custom when he knew he was right. Shadows were gathering, and now, when Hawkins's fatal counsel had, with the support of Sir Nicholas Clifford, carried the day, the fleet, starting again on November 4th, continued loitering. Twice it anchored among the Virgin Isles, to water and organize the land troops; also navigation was difficult, for we find Drake scouting ahead in his barge to find a passage. It is impossible to accept the explanation that Drake was playing his old trick of

[1] Maynarde, *Spanish Account of the Proceedings at Porto Rico*, p. 48.

causing the fleet to vanish, in order to put the enemy off their guard,[1] for any further delay would only enable the enemy to barricade the harbour of San Juan the more impregnably, or give them ample time to trans-ship the treasure from the disabled vessel on to the frigates, and be off home again. It is far more probable that Drake himself was of divided mind, wondering whether it was now of any avail to attempt the capture of the treasure-ship at all, or whether it was better, giving it up, to proceed to the bigger task of taking Panama. Whatever the reason was, he did not appear off San Juan till November 14th. Hawkins, who for the last day or two had been sinking, died as they came within sight of the harbour, with disconsolate speeches on his lips. He was old and tired : "his heart was broken," he said, "that he saw no other but danger of ruin likely to ensue of the whole voyage," and perhaps he realized that his own obstinacy in procrastination was the cause of the jeopardy. Drake, too late, was left in sole command of the fleet.

As he must have expected, the Spaniards were ready for him, but with a dash of his old contempt for the brutes he anchored within range of the forts. He had often played such a bravado, to inspire in his men that rollicking confidence which had pulled triumph out of defeat, but now disaster followed. That night, as he sat at supper, a shot came through the side of his cabin in the steerage, struck from under him the stool on which he was sitting, and killed Sir Nicholas Clifford and a young officer called Brute Browne,[2] to whom Drake was devoted. "Ah, dear Brute," he exclaimed, "I could grieve for thee, but now is no time for me to let down my spirits." Perhaps he had intended some attack that

[1] Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, vol. ii. p. 418.

[2] The Spanish account says that this shot killed Hawkins, but Hawkins was already dead.

night, but that was given up and the fleet taken out of range.

By next morning Drake had moved his ships to the west of the harbour, where three small islands protected them. The Spanish frigates were within the port, and, as he learned from some prisoners he captured, the treasure on which they and the English fleet alike were centred had already been conveyed from the disabled ship into one of the forts, where now it lay, three millions of ducats. For defence, the Spaniards had sunk a big hulk across the mouth of the channel into the harbour, but without the frigates the treasure could not leave the island, and that night Drake launched an attack of pinnaces and small craft on them. A hot action ensued: one was burned down to the water-line, and both Spaniards and English lost heavily. But the other four frigates were still fighting-fit, the treasure still uncaptured, and this attack had failed. But Drake would not give up the chance of so huge a prize, and since there was sailing-room—it was the young Drake who noticed that—round the edge of the hulk that had been sunk to bar the channel-mouth, he determined, with a flash of the old daring, to sail his great ships right into the harbour, and there fight frigate and forts together. Next day he took his fleet out to windward to attempt one of those superb pell-mells of his youth. But though his brain could conceive these swift strokes, the speed and the dash necessary to success were gone. Young Drake, we may be sure, would have vanished out to sea that night to get to windward of the harbour, and have swooped down at dawn. But old Drake waited till next day, and before he could get back to the mouth of the harbour the Spaniards had sunk three more ships, completely blocking the extrance.

He knew he was beaten then, and that the great treasure he had come to seek would never gladden the eyes of

Elizabeth. There was still, he thought, a chance that an attack by land would succeed, but Baskerville was against it, and it was not attempted. But more surely now when he had failed, it was no time for him to let down his spirits, and he thumped the table in his old way, and told his council that he would take them to twenty places "more wealthy and easier to be gotten." Was there not Nombre de Dios, with the mule-bells tinkling in the dusk of morning down the road from Panama, and Panama itself the key to the fabulous wealth of Peru? Why fret, then, over one treasure-ship? Off to the south-west, where lay the source of the golden river which so long had been coined into the navies of Spain.

It had been unlike the Drake who had so gloriously and gainfully skylarked with his Devon boys on the Spanish Main, to be forced to remind himself that he must not let down his spirits, for never before had he known the need of such an effort, and now there was this last failure to be chased out of his darkening soul. As the coast of the Main began to outline itself, there came to him the remembrance of that first voyage of his on which, at Rio de la Hacha, the Spaniards had swindled him and Captain Lovell, now long dead. He had repaid himself a thousandfold and ten thousandfold for that loss, in wedges of gold and bars of silver, but never had he considered the debt truly cancelled, and now disastrously he turned eastwards from his course, to finish with Rio de la Hacha. Revenge, pure and simple, can alone account for his diverging from the direct course to Nombre de Dios, whence his land force would start for the capture of Panama. Young Drake would have known that surprise was the source of success, and a dash to Nombre de Dios might have found the Isthmus undefended. To loiter, to score small successes, imperilled all that was worth gaining, but young Drake

was dead and the dash of him and the glory of his swiftness, and now we follow the wraith of what Drake had been.

On December 1st, 1595, he landed his troops to the east of Rio de la Hacha, and next morning anchored off the harbour with the fleet. The troops, under Baskerville, were already in possession, and Drake's revenge was dust, for the place had been deserted on the news of his being in the western seas. Just a pocketful of treasure was found, but still Drake would not go for the dwindling chance of capturing Panama. News of his advent, as he was now aware, had come to the Main, but the days of his youth and his splendour were over, and he left Baskerville to burn stupid villages and devastate the barren country, and moved the fleet again eastwards, for the paltry capture of the pearl-fishing coast-village of Rancheria. There is no accounting for this move, except by supposing that, as in the case of his yielding to Hawkins, he distrusted his own initiative, and that his fire was burning low.

Rancheria was taken without resistance, and he held it to ransom. Pearls to the value of twenty-four thousand ducats were offered, but they were found to be worth nothing like that sum, and Drake refused to accept them. Two days later, the Governor of the place came in under a flag of truce and frankly told Drake that he had been outwitted. He had no intention of ransoming Rancheria, for such ransoming was contrary to his King's orders; he had only been making *pourparlers* and proffering a derisive fraction of the ransom, to gain sufficient time to warn the coast and countryside, so that the inhabitants could escape into the woods with their valuables. Drake gave him two hours to get clear, for he had come in under the flag of truce, and had the empty pleasure of burning an empty town.

He soon saw that the Governor's stratagem had suc-

ceeded. He sailed westwards again, to join up with Baskerville, and found Santa Marta similarly deserted and treasureless. He burned it, not wasting any fruitless time over parleys for a ransom, and at last, too late, moved on to Nombre de Dios, where he should have gone direct from Porto Rico. Here a handful of Spaniards held a small fort, but they fled on the first assault, and once more the English marched into a deserted town. Since they had left San Juan, not a Spanish ship worth chasing had been sighted at sea,[1] not a Spanish regiment had opposed them on land, and, beyond a few bars of silver and a few sticks of gold, no treasure had been taken. They could destroy, but that was all; the rest was like some pilgrimage in a sombre dream, with who knew what crash of nightmare to follow on this silence and this emptiness?

Any one who loved Drake—and of the men in the fleet there was none who did not—must have been better content that he had died now, before the gathering dusk had expunged the last gleam of his old splendour. But the dark was not spared him, and now came the great adventure which should either restore the noon and crown the expedition with final and stupendous success, or stamp it with the brand of irremediable failure. Nombre de Dios was in his hands, and there lay the track to Panama over that watershed from which he had first seen the Southern Sea, from the tree-top where his faithful Cimaroons had led him. But now there was no time to get in touch with them again, for the alarm had flared through the Main that the Dragon was here, and on December 29th Baskerville started across the Isthmus with seven hundred and fifty of the flower of his troops.

There were two possible routes: the one by water up the river Chagres, which was navigable to within twelve

[1] Maynarde, *Sir Francis Drake: his Voyage*, p. 19.

miles of Panama, the other by land from Nombre de Dios. Drake selected the latter, and though Baskerville seems to have foreseen the difficulties that might lie ahead, now that the time had gone by for a surprise attack, he consented to attempt it. He was to make all speed to Panama, while Drake moved the fleet round to Porto Bello, the new Spanish harbour, twenty miles to the west along the coast, and there await news from Baskerville and his triumphant return. But there would be time before that to burn Nombre de Dios and the shipping in the harbour, and Drake celebrated the passing of the old year, and the dawn of the new, by this conflagration. On the evening of January 1st, 1596, Nombre de Dios was a smoking ruin, and the fleet was preparing to start for Porto Bello, when there came in an Indian bringing a despatch from Baskerville. He had failed to reach Panama, and was now in full retreat.

Next evening Baskerville brought in a tired, footsore, and hungry remnant of his men. They had marched up the narrow track which led through the forest, incessantly harassed by Spanish sharp-shooters. On gaining the watershed they found a concealed fort which commanded the road, and twenty men were killed before they localized it. Even if they had succeeded in getting past that, there were two more such forts, so Baskerville had learned from friendly Indians, before they reached Panama, which, on the news of Drake's presence on the coast, had been very strongly fortified. Provisions already were running low, for the rain had rendered much of them uneatable, and from ahead they could hear the crash of the felled trees with which the Spaniards were obstructing the narrow path. Even if they had been able to reach Panama, Baskerville knew that with his weakened force he would be quite unable to hold it, and so he decided to retreat. He had been

obliged to leave in the hands of the enemy such wounded as could not march.

The fire died out of Drake's eyes as he heard, and the brightness faded, so that never afterwards in the short tale of his earthly days that was to follow was the light of mirth seen there.[1] But the undaunted front with which he had ever met adversity was still his; none must see his secret surrender, and he put to his captains what their next enterprise should be. He had no personal knowledge of the coast further westwards, but there were maps and charts, and he showed them Trujillo, the harbour in Honduras, and the golden cities round the lake of Nicaragua, and asked which should be theirs. Baskerville cried that they could have first one and then the other, and surely behind that brave reply there lurked just such shadow of despair as lay behind the question. But up went the sails again, and the course was set westward.

The fleet met contrary winds which blew without intermission, the ships needed careening, and waiting for the weather to moderate they put in at the island of Escudo de Veragua to clean and water. Of all ports on that fevered coast, it was the most pestilential:[2] dysentery began to ravage the fleet, and Drake, who all his life had been immune from the arrows of the sun and the miasma of tropical swamps, sickened of it. But still he held on as if the voyage was going prosperously forward, and he told Maynarde that God had many things for them yet. So the ships were cleaned, and the pinnaces put together, but still the winds were contrary, and on January 23rd, 1596, his strength failed, and he kept his cabin. One more order only he gave, and that was to take the fleet out of this bower of death, and go before the wind back to Porto Bello.

On January 27th, before the fleet reached Porto Bello,

[1] Maynarde, *Sir Francis Drake: his Voyage*, p. 19. [2] *Ibid.*

the great Admiral knew that he lay dying. He had brought his will with him on this last voyage, though he had not signed it yet ; now he sent for Captain Jonas Bodenham, his wife's nephew, and his youngest brother Thomas, who had served with him on all his voyages since the old days of the Spanish Main. He signed his will, and added a codicil which Bodenham wrote for him, and he bade his brother be " kind and loving " to Bodenham, while Bodenham must requite him with faithful dealing. After that he sent for some of his officers, giving them such little mementoes of himself as were at hand, and all that day he lay with young Whitlocke watching him. He told the boy there were some jewels he wished him to have and his finest silver plate : [1] perhaps they talked, too, of the fair days and doings they had seen together. Noon passed and the day declined, and there was no news from his cabin but that his sickness was sore on him, and his life ebbing out.

Night fell, and the flickering spirit flared up once more. Drake struggled up from his bed, and insisted on being dressed : Whitlocke must fetch his armour and put it on him that he might die in soldier's harness. That was done, and in the delirium of his fever he raved wildly and incoherently. But the frenzy passed, and presently he allowed the boy to lay him down again on his bed, and loosen his armour. And very early in the morning, before the rising of the winter sun, even as a child falls gently to sleep, Drake died.

The fleet reached Porto Bello that day and anchored. Next morning it put out to sea again and hove-to a league from the shore. Sickness had carried off so many of the crews and of the troops that the ships were much undermanned, and now, on each side of the " Defiance," where Drake lay in his lead coffin, was a vessel that was dedi-

[1] Lady Eliott Drake, *Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake*, vol. i. p. 126, quoted from Sir J. Whitlocke's *Liber Famelicus*.

cated to be his funeral pyre. Fuel was piled on them, and when all was ready they were set ablaze. The guns of all the fleet saluted their Admiral, and on the deck of his flagship his trumpeters blared out their homage to the dead. The leaden shell slid forward, and in the tranquillity of the deep there was laid to rest the greatest of the Master Mariners of England, who had won her the sea as her heritage.



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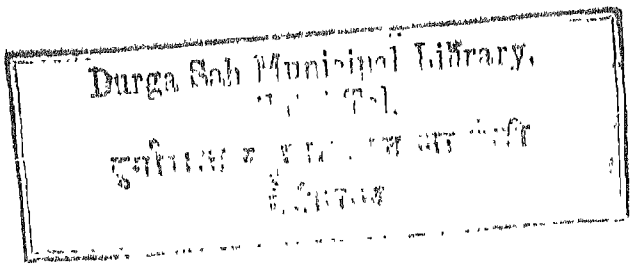
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